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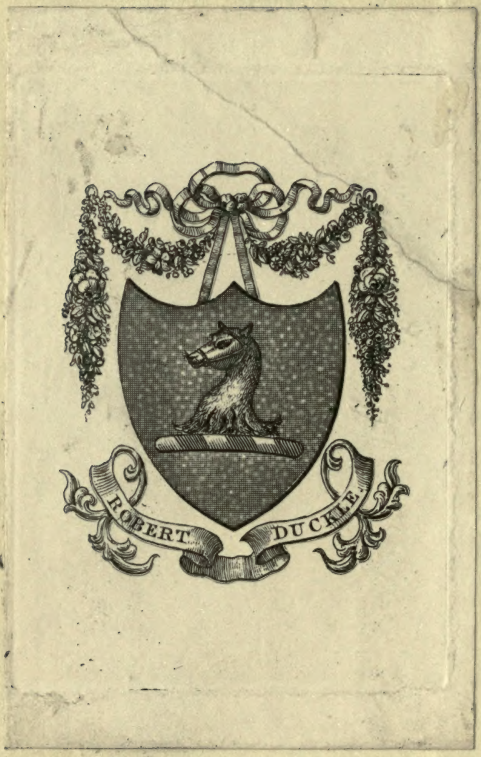
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CHARACTERISTICS OF GOETHE.

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CHARACTERISTICS

OF

GOETHE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

FALK, VON MÜLLER,

&c.

WITH NOTES, ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF GERMAN LITERATURE,

BY SARAH AUSTIN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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GOETHE,

POURTRAYED

FROM FAMILIAR PERSONAL INTERCOURSE.

CHAPTER VII.

Goethe's opinions on his literary cotemporaries.—Heinrich von Kleist: his gloomy views of life.—"Käthchen von Heilbronn." — "Michel Kohlhaas." — Kleist's irritability.— "Penthesilea." — Lessing. — Goethe's admiration for him. — His "Hamburgische Dramaturgie." — His plays.—"Minna von Barnheim."— "Emilia Galeotti." — Winkelman. — Golden age of Weimar.—Wardrobe of German literati.—Lenz.—The "Bal paré."—The French language.—Private theatricals.—The Saxon Rittmeister.—Goethe as Manager.

THE conversation once fell on Kleist (23) and his *Käthchen von Heilbronn.* Goethe found fault with that northern rigour of a hypochondriacal temperament which distinguished him. "To a matured understanding," said he, "it is impossible to enter with

pleasure into the power of such motives as he employed in his poetry. Even in his *Kohlhaas,* beautifully told and cleverly combined as it is, there is a general disjointedness. It requires a potent spirit of contradiction to make an incident so isolated serve as an illustration of such an all-pervading deep-rooted gloom respecting the course of human affairs. There is an unlovely, a dissonant, principle in nature, with which poetry ought not to meddle; with which it cannot reconcile itself, let the handling of the matter be never so exquisite."

And then he returned to his favourite theme, of the cheerfulness, the grace, the bright, joyous colouring given to life in the Italian novels, with which he occupied himself the more busily the more darkly the times loured around him.

At this, he called to mind that the gayest of these tales owed their existence to a

peculiarly gloomy period, during the prevalence of the plague. "I have a right," continued he, after a pause, "to find fault with Kleist, for I loved him and extolled him; but whether it be that his education (as is now the case with many) was troubled and marred by the times, or whether any deeper cause lay at the bottom,—enough—he does not perform what he promised. This hypochondria is quite too strong—it destroys him as a man and as a poet. You know what trouble it cost me, what trials and rehearsals, to bring out his *Wasserkrug* on this stage. That it did not succeed, after all, lay in the circumstance that, though there was a great deal of talent and humour, it was deficient in rapidity of action and in finish. But to ascribe its failure to me, nay, even, as was the fact, to want to send me a challenge to Weimar, on that ground, 'indicates,' as Schiller said, 'some grievous obliquity of nature, the cause and the excuse

for which is to be traced only to excessive irritability of nerves, or to disease.'

"I wish you would read *Käthchen von Heilbronn*," said he, turning to me, "as I know your inclination for Kleist, and repeat to me the main *motivo* of it. Then, and not before, I will discuss the point with myself whether I can read it too. The reading of his *Penthesilea* lately answered very ill to me. The tragedy really borders, in some places, on broad comedy; for instance, in the passage where the Amazon appears on the stage with only one breast, and assures the public that all her feelings had taken refuge in this; a *motivo* which, in the mouth of the Columbine of a Neapolitan popular theatre, and addressed to an impudent Polichinello, might certainly prove effective enough; so far, at least, as the wit were not rendered disagreeable, even to such an audience, by the repulsiveness of the image."

Of Lessing's (24) merit, talent, and acuteness; of the distinctness with which, in his *Hamburgischen Dramaturgie*, he marked out the way to all higher attempts at dramatic poetry in Germany (though opposed by Frederick the Great, Voltaire, Gottsched, and all the admirers of the French drama); of the new era he founded, by the introduction of Shakspeare (with which the succeeding rapid burst of our literature was most intimately connected), Goethe spoke with the profoundest sensibility and gratitude.

"As an acting play," he remarked, "perhaps the whole modern dramatic art can show nothing so incomparable as the two first acts of *Minna von Barnheim*, in which sharply defined character and primitive German manners are intimately united with a rapid march of incidents. In the latter part the play falls off, and indeed the plan of it does not deserve that it should

maintain such a preeminence; but this can neither detract from the praise it merits, nor induce any fair man to qualify it.

"In the *Emilia Galeotti*, it is a masterly and highly characteristic conception that the Chamberlain should lead Emilia into the Prince's way; but that the Prince, by going into the church, and intermeddling in the transaction, should spoil both Marinelli's game and his own. Nevertheless the manner in which Lessing works out the incidents of the plot is not always equally fine. A note which the Prince wrote to his former mistress, the Countess Orsina, and in which he declines her visit for the morrow, being accidentally left lying about (if indeed, as the Countess herself remarks, it be not blasphemy to talk of accident in such things,) becomes the cause that her dreaded rival arrives at the very moment in which Count Appiani is shot, his betrothed bride carried off by Marinelli to the Prince's country

house, and thus delivered over into the hands of the murderer of her lover.

These are traces of a master hand, which sufficiently prove what profound insight into the nature of dramatic art was granted to Lessing. Be assured, too, that we are perfectly conscious what we owe to him, and to those like him, particularly to Winkelman."

The reign of the young duke of Weimar was a glorious time for Weimar, and for the whole of Germany. Men of genius thronged from east and west to this modern seat of the muses; thinking that they too, like Goethe, Herder, and Wieland, should find an asylum. Bertuch(25), the father, who was treasurer to the duke, used in after times to speak with great glee of a singular head in the accounts which he

had to submit in those days. It consisted almost entirely of breeches, waistcoats, shoes, and stockings for German literati, who came wandering within Weimar's gates slenderly provided with those articles. The duke's youthful gaiety and Goethe's drollery contrived to create many a diverting scene out of these materials.

About this period it was that Lenz (26), an early and original friend of Goethe's, came to Weimar. It happened that the duke and Goethe were absent. He alighted at the "Erbprinz" inn, where he soon learned that there was to be a *bal paré* the same evening at court.

Bal paré and *bal masqué* were to poor Lenz's ears one and the same thing; for his whole soul was German, and he hated the French language as the deadly and besetting sin of the higher classes in Germany. I will be at this, whatever it is, thought he, I shall want nothing but a black domino

and a mask. He accordingly sent the waiter for these articles. The man stared at him with some astonishment, but obeyed the strange gentleman's order. At the appointed hour, Lenz actually went to court in this dress. The amazement of the company may be conceived, when suddenly a black domino and mask made its appearance amid the gay and brilliant dresses of the dancers. Lenz, however, did not, in the least degree, perceive what an extraordinary part he was playing. On the contrary, he walked about with the utmost confidence and composure among the spectators, and asked one of the most distinguished young ladies in the room to dance. The lady, however, as might be expected, begged first to know the "name and character," as porters call it, of the person who addressed her; and on his replying, "I am Lenz," she, hearing a name so little indicative of equality of rank, refused with equal

brevity; or, in technical language, "she regretted," *&c. &c.*

Fortunately, just as the *embarras* had reached its height, Goethe appeared. He immediately recognized, spite of the domino, his long-expected, old, and eccentric friend. He sent for Lenz to the gallery adjoining the ball room, and after the first joyful welcome, he exclaimed, "But tell me, what the devil put it in your head to make your appearance at court wholly uninvited, and in such a garb too?"

"Invited or uninvited," said Lenz, who had not quite got over the mortification of his rejection, "what does that signify? it is a *bal masqué*—there, I think, every body is free to enter."

"What do you mean, *bal masqué?*" replied Goethe; "it is a *bal paré*, you child, who can't distinguish one thing from another!"

"Well, *bal paré* or *bal masqué*, as you please," growled Lenz; "what do I care for

your pack of hair-breadth distinctions, and all your cursed French chatter? For my part, I am in as great a fever every time I hear a word of Welsch as a Turkey cock* (*welscher Hahn*) at the sight of scarlet. If your ears are washed with purer holy water than mine, thank God for it; but once for all, I beg you not to plague me with any of your court jargon, unless you wish me to strap up my bundle again and be off. If, indeed, they had but any thing of a language that they could speak out like men,—short, clear, and intelligible like ours; but they snuffle through their noses

* *Welsch* most commonly signifies Italian; but, in strictness, it includes French and all the cognate languages. The words Gael, Gaul, Gallic, Wales, Wallis, &c. are all of the same family, varying in form, according as they were applied by their Roman, or by their Teutonic conquerors, to different tribes of Kelts. The germanic English, of course, denoted by it the Gauls or Welsh, with whom *they* were more immediately in contact,—the Britons; the Germans of the mainland, French, Italians, Spaniards, &c.—*Transl.*

like a bagpipe, and no honest German can be a bit the wiser for all the quantity of stuff they send forth."

Goethe and Wieland (whom Lenz looked upon as half a Frenchman, on account of his great partiality to French literature) endeavoured by every means in their power to pacify their exasperated friend. They quitted the court shortly after, but not without carrying away matter for a joyous and intellectual evening's entertainment.

About this same time an amateur theatre was opened at Weimar, in which Goethe, Corona Schroeter, Bertuch, von Einsiedel, and others, took the most lively and active interest. On one occasion the Jealous Husband (*Der eifersuchtige Ehemann*) was played; the part of the lover was allotted to Herr von Einsiedel. Unfortunately, how-

ever, just before the time of performance, he was attacked by a sudden indisposition. The parts could not be recast at so short a notice, and, to the great disappointment of all the party, the whole thing was at a stand.

At this juncture, a bold Saxon Rittmeister (*Chef d'Escadron*), more dashing and good-natured than skilled in such matters, offered to undertake the part. On the third day he went to Herr von Einsiedel, and asked him to hear him recite it. It promised to go off tolerably, especially as they could reckon on a good prompter; but when it came to the performance, the result was very different, and the enterprising Rittmeister was in the greatest perplexity. He looked as red and hot as if he were charging at the head of his squadron of hussars, and were just going to hew down an enemy; however, he recovered himself a little, and went on with his part till the scene in which he is sur-

prised with his mistress by the jealous husband, and stabbed with a dagger. Here he suddenly forgot the catch-word, stammered and blundered, over and over, while Bertuch, who played the jealous husband, and had been waiting a long time behind the scenes, dagger in hand, could not come on. The Rittmeister now began the part again, when suddenly Bertuch, by the advice of Goethe, who superintended the whole, rushed on the stage, and tried to put an end, *ex abrupto,* to the life of his unhappy rival by a vigorous thrust; but the Rittmeister absolutely would not fall. In vain did Bertuch repeatedly shout into his ear, "Devil take you, fall then!" He did not move from the spot, but remained standing as stiff as a post, perfectly erect, by the side of his beloved, reiterating his assurances to the bystanders, who were conjuring him to fall, that he had not yet got to the word. In this state of things, equally distressing

to the manager and to the other performers, the former took a heroic resolution, and called out with a thundering voice from behind the scenes, "If he will not fall in front, stab him in the rear; we must get rid of him in one way or other; he'll ruin the whole play." At this decisive appeal, Bertuch, who was then a very energetic person, though now become somewhat feeble and indecisive, manned himself. "Die," cried he, with a terrific voice, and at the same instant aimed such an emphatic blow at his antagonist, that he was completely thrown off his guard by this manœuvre in flank, and fell to the ground. At the same instant, four sturdy scene-shifters were sent on the stage by Goethe, with positive orders to drag the dead man off, whether he would or not. This was faithfully executed, and, to the extreme joy of the spectators, the performance went on without interruption.

CHAPTER VIII.

Amusements of the court of Weimar.—Gipsy parties.—Ettersburg.—Forest-theatres.—Their decorations.—The hermitage at the Kickelhahn.—Goethe's inscription.—The sacred tree.—Goethe and Klinger.—Klinger's coolness.—Von Einsiedel.—His horror of beer.—Gleim.—His first interview with Goethe.—Goethe's striking appearance.—His extempore readings.—His wild imagination and humour.—Goethe or the devil?

OFTEN did Bertuch, in his quality of *maitre de plaisir*, receive orders, even at a late hour in the evening, to have the sumpter waggon, or travelling kitchen, ready, for that the court would start at early dawn for the forest. If it was a short expedition, two or three sumpter asses were sufficient. If it was more distant, over hill and dale, far into the tranquil country and under God's blue heaven, then indeed the night was a busy one, and all the pots and pans

were in requisition. In the ducal kitchens there was such a boiling and stewing and roasting; such a slaughter of capons, pigeons, and fowls of all sorts:—wherever your eye glanced you saw bustle and activity. Late as it was, the ponds of the Ilm must yield their fish, the forest its partridges, the cellars their choicest and most generous wines.

A party of ladies and gentlemen, often mixed in merry groups, then took their way early in the morning. The trees which peopled the deep solitude, and were wont to see only the soaring hawk which hung poised above their tops, or the wild-eyed deer, which even at the door of the charcoal-burner's hut found a leafy sanctuary, wondered at the joyous laugh and gay song of the festive throng. It seemed that now for the first time they had attained to all their rights and dignities, when they threw their friendly shade over youth and beauty, glad-

ness and poetry, and mingled the rustling of their verdant roofs with the murmur of a common delight.

In these expeditions, dramatic amusements, of a greater or lesser kind, frequently formed a part of the day's diversion. Trees, groves, meadows and brooks served to form the stage. At Ettersburg, that delightful wooded hill, peopled with numerous herds of deer, the traces and boundaries of such forest-theatres are still visible. What merry scenes took place in a company so gay; so rich in all the bright, enterprising spirit and joyous vivacity of youth; what a contrast was presented by the calm, regular action of nature with the wild feats of these extempore plays, and how prettily the arrangements for them formed, as it were, a framework around them,—a play within and without the play,—every reader but moderately gifted with imagination may picture to himself.

On the Ilm too, just at that point where the river makes a beautiful bend around the shore, a regular theatre was constructed by these lovers of nature and of art. Trees and all natural objects, gipsies, fishermen, nixies, water spirits, sun, moon, and stars, all were dexterously introduced and gracefully employed in the course of the action. One of these occasions gave birth to the gipsy song,

"Im Nebelgeriesel, im tiefsten Schnee," &c. (27)

This was also about the time at which Goethe wrote the last act of his *Iphigenie,* in a little hermitage on the romantic secluded Kickelhahn near Ilmenau, the windows of which commanded the most extensive view over the Thuringian forest.

This half-decayed hut, built of trunks of trees and covered with moss, is still stand-

ing, and on its walls is the following inscription in Goethe's hand writing:

"Unter allen Gipfeln ist Ruh';
In allen Wäldern hörest du
Keinen Laut!
Die Vögelein schlafen im Walde,
Warte nur! balde, balde,
Schläfst auch du (28)!"

On the trees at Ettersburg various inscriptions, half or wholly overgrown and effaced, are still to be seen, which not unfrequently have an obvious reference to those happy days of Aranjuez which a youth overflowing with the joyousness of early life, and with poetical enthusiasm, passed here. At the hermitage, where a visit from a wandering stag is not uncommon, and where the forester watches the game by the light of the autumnal moon, a majestic tree is yet standing, on which, inscribed as in a living album, the names of Herder, Gleim, Lavater, Wieland, and Goethe, are still distinctly legible.

Klinger(29), as is well known, was Goethe's countryman. A friend of mine, with whom I was once talking about him, his writings, his residence in Weimar, and his departure for Petersburg, where he was made General, told me that one morning Klinger went to Goethe, took a large packet of manuscript out of his pocket, and began to read aloud. Goethe bore it for a time, but at length he sprang from his seat exclaiming, "What cursed stuff is this you have been writing again? The devil may bear it if he can!" and ran away. This, however, did not in the least degree disconcert Klinger, nor disturb his equanimity; he rose quietly, put his manuscript in his pocket, and merely said, "Curious! this is the second man with whom this has happened to me today!" Wieland declared that if it had been his case he should have found it difficult to preserve such composure. Goethe replied, "So should I.

But the very thing that proves Klinger to have been born to be a General is that he has such confounded coolness and assurance. I have often predicted it, in former times."

Von Einsiedel is honourably known to the learned world, not only by his translation of the "Brothers" of Terence, but also several pretty tales in Wieland's *Dsihinistan* claim him as their author. He had many most strange peculiarities. One was, that he had a perfect horror of beer. Somebody once remarked, that "nothing was so disgusting to him as to go into a house early in a morning, and find the bottles and glasses which had been used the preceding night standing about on the table." "By your leave (*Halten's zu Gnaden*)," interrupted Einsiedel hastily, "if such a thing ever happened to me, I would never set foot

in such a cursed house again as long as I lived."

Another time a brother beer-hater was protesting that not only he never tasted a drop of beer, but never would articulate the word beer. "By your leave," exclaimed Einsiedel with great vehemence, "and I never in all my life wrote it."

He wrote a very illegible hand, and was equally remarkable for talent and for absence of mind. He once entered a friend's room, bringing an enormous packet of manuscript, and said with great earnestness, "There's a romance which I wrote six years ago; there are glorious things in it, but the devil may read it if he can. See what you can make of it!"

Herr von Einsiedel united the most amiable and agreeable character with an engaging exterior and manners; qualities which were surpassed by the integrity and kindness of his heart. He was chamberlain

at the court of the Dowager Duchess Amelia, and one of the first and oldest friends of Wieland, who had a singular value and esteem for him.

" Shortly after Goethe had written his Werther," said the venerable Gleim (30) to me one day, " I came to Weimar, and wished to know him. I had brought with me the last Göttingen *Musen-Almanack* as a literary novelty, and read here and there a piece to the company in which I was passing the evening. While I was reading, a young man, booted and spurred, in a short green shooting jacket thrown open, had come in and mingled with my audience. I had scarcely remarked his entrance. He sat down opposite to me, and listened very attentively. I scarcely knew what there was about him that struck me particularly,

except a pair of brilliant black Italian eyes. But it was decreed that I should know more of him.

"During a short pause, in which some gentlemen and ladies were discussing the merits of the pieces I had read, lauding some and censuring others, the gallant young sportsman (for such I took him to be) arose from his chair, and bowing with a most courteous and ingratiating air to me, offered to relieve me from time to time in reading aloud, lest I should be tired. I could do no less than accept so polite an offer, and immediately handed him the book. But oh! Apollo and all ye Muses,—not forgetting the Graces,—what was I then to hear! At first, indeed, things went on smoothly enough.

'Die Zephyr'n lauschten
Die Bäche rauschten
Die Sonne
Verbreitet ihre Licht mit Wonne (31).'

The somewhat more solid substantial fare

of Voss, Leopold Stolberg, and Bürger, too, were delivered in such a manner that no one had any reason to complain.

"All at once, however, it was as if some wild and wanton devil had taken possession of the young reader, and I thought I saw the Wild Huntsman bodily before me. He read poems that had no existence in the Almanack; he broke out into all possible modes and dialects. Hexameters, iambics, doggrel verses, one after another, or blended in strange confusion, came tumbling out in torrents.

"What wild and humourous fantasies did he not combine that evening! Amidst them, came such noble magnificent thoughts, thrown in, detached and flitting, that the authors to whom he ascribed them must have thanked God on their knees if they had fallen upon their desks.

"As soon as the joke was discovered, a universal merriment spread through the

room. He put every body present out of countenance in one way or another. Even my Mæcenasship, which I had always regarded it as a sort of duty to exercise towards young authors, poets, and artists, had its turn. Though he praised it highly on the one side, he did not forget to insinuate, on the other, that I claimed a sort of property in the individuals to whom I had afforded support and countenance. In a little fable composed extempore in doggrel verses, he likened me, wittily enough, to a worthy and most enduring turkey-hen, that sits on a great heap of eggs of her own and other people's, and hatches them with infinite patience; but to whom it sometimes happens to have a chalk egg put under her instead of a real one; a trick at which she takes no offence.

"That is either Goethe or the devil," cried I to Wieland, who sat opposite to me at the table. "Both," replied he; "he has

the devil in him again today; and then he is like a wanton colt that flings out before and behind, and you do well not to go too near him."

Gleim used to dwell with uncommon glee on this *escapade* of Goethe's, as did Wieland, from whose mouth I heard and collected the chief features of the story, as I have just related it.

CHAPTER IX.

Herder's opinions of mere artists.—Earnestness demanded of man.—Goethe and Herder.—Their incompatible characters.—Merk.—His opinion of Goethe.—His tragical end.—Herder's earnestness, philanthropy, and love of general principles.

As I was once talking in the tone I have used above, of the lofty indifference with which Goethe soared and hung poised above the world's game; he to whom I addressed myself, with his high-arched brow, from beneath which, as from a temple of the divinity, gleamed the radiant fire of his eyes, broke in upon me thus:

"All that is very well. But whether man here below *ought* to ascend into that region where fictitious and real life become one to his perception; where he loses the character of man, though not that of artist; where the light shines, but does not warm

nor quicken; and whether the adoption of these maxims would not lead to a general want of character—this is another question.

"We must not contest with the gods their seats of eternal tranquillity. They may regard all that passes on this earth as a game fore-ordered by them. But man, subject to all human necessities and frailties, ought not to be amused by any painted drop-scene; he ought to retain that holy earnestness without which art degenerates at last into mere juggling and buffoonery. Play—for ever play. Sophocles did not play; Æschylus, still less. These are all inventions of modern times, which are little or nothing worth. David sang hymns of bolder flight than even Pindar, and governed a kingdom toboot. What do you govern? It is good and praiseworthy that you should examine (or, as you are pleased to call it, make yourselves masters of) all, from the hyssop that groweth on the wall,

to the cedar of Lebanon—every phenomenon and variety of nature; only you ought not, meanwhile, to lose sight of Man,—the crown of all phenomena, in his moral, inborn greatness.

"When I think of Nero, how he set Rome on fire, and touched the lyre while he gazed on the conflagration—aye, he too *played!* It is a splendid picture! What does it signify to Nero's architect that women and children shed tears of desolation over their burning city? That is an old story. He, for his part, draws the plan for the rebuilding of Rome, and if his drawing looks well on paper, and does not get rubbed out, that is all he cares about. All will be executed 'in an improved taste,' and people ought to be grateful to the world's master for bringing about such a reform. Here then we have a pictured, and a real Rome. The difference is not so great. We are artists, gods, Neros; and be we how we

may, or what we may, it is always the right:

' Denn Recht hat jeder eigene Charakter
Es gibt kein Unrecht als den Widerspruch (32)'"

The mighty voice that uttered these words has long been silent. From the tone of thought they express, opposed to that of Goethe as north to south, the reader will easily guess that it was Herder's.

Merk (33), another early friend of the poet, found it equally impossible to accommodate himself to this unqualified direction of his whole being and character towards observation.

Once, as Herder told me, he said to Goethe in his forcible piquant manner, " Look you, in comparison with what you might be in the world, and are not, all that you have written is, in my eyes, mere dirt."

Merk passed half a year in Weimar, and was at length so out of humour that

he ceased to see Goethe at all. "What the devil," said he, "possesses Wolfgang to play the laquais and the lickspit about the court of Weimar,—to humbug others, or be humbugged himself? Can he find nothing better to do?" "Merk," added Herder, "was an oddity; rigid on many points, often paradoxical, sometimes gloomy, sometimes giving out glorious flashes of light; it was his own fiery spirit that consumed him; he collapsed gradually into himself; the flame sent up a few fitful gleams, and then all was darkness and ashes. Merk ended a self-murderer."

Goethe, on his side, not unfrequently felt himself wounded to the very quick at being thus misunderstood by his friends, among whom too was Jacobi (34). He acted as, according to his nature, he could not help acting, and meant no offence. He expected, if no praise, at least no unkind reproaches. But his friends insisted on having

him something different from what he was. The Chosen of nature must pourtray nothing but the Choicest. They wanted to confine him within a circle, lofty and exquisite indeed, but very narrow; that, namely, in which he had first won their favour. But Goethe's genius was all-embracing, and disdained every path which led him away, or separated him, from nature.

As the difference between him and Herder was a serious one, even the extraordinary qualities which distinguished both, rendered a reconciliation impossible. With Herder all forms became ideas; nay, he soon reduced even all historic facts into "Ideas, towards a history of the human race*." On the contrary, in Goethe, all ideas became transmuted into forms. He would have liked, as we have seen above, to renounce the imperfect medium of language; to

* "*Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*;" the title of his great work.—*Transl.*

speak, like nature, in symbols, and to throw his whole imagination, with the vividness and reality of sense, into the existence of a flower or a star.

To him, as to Nature, it sufficed to revel in unwitnessed solitude, and to pass from one agreeable state of existence to another, through all forms and modes of life.

At such moments he disliked even the mention of Herder, whose northern severity led him to insist on overshadowing those gay, delightful visions of art and imagination, with the thunder-clouds and mists of politics and of actual life.

These, as Goethe truly remarked, were two totally different and widely-severed spheres; it was absolutely necessary to keep them quite distinct, and to let every man take care of himself, and God of us all. Thus what seemed to Goethe narrow and partial, Herder called noble and philanthropic; while, on the contrary, what Her-

der admired as the infinitude of a great Idea, revealing itself to man in various god-like emanations;—in the valour of the hero, the wisdom of the legislator, the inspiration of the poet, or the events of a world,—this sort of elevation moved Goethe so little, that such characters as Luther and Coriolanus excited in him a sort of uncomfortable feeling, which could be satisfactorily explained only on the hypothesis that their natures stood in a mysterious sort of opposition with his.

Goethe's genius and disposition were for the Beautiful, Herder's for the Sublime. Herder was powerfully affected by the spirit of his age; it formed a part of himself; he laboured to advance it; he proclaimed and adorned it in his writings. From the remotest corners of the earth, from the most distant ages, like one collecting lost jewels, he brought together, with glad industry, all the Great and the Beautiful, in

order to deck with it his beloved Man—"the image of God obscured,"—and to restore to him the lost glory of Eden.

Whatever Herder undertook, aimed at giving some loftier course to human action. Who is not filled with veneration and love at the contemplation of such endeavours?

He execrated books—"but what books did he write*!" exclaimed Wieland (who was infinitely attached to Herder), in his delightful, sportive manner, on one occasion, when Herder's aversion to them was mentioned in his presence. The amiable poet did not comprehend the profound bitterness of soul which lay at the bottom of this declaration, nor reverence its source as it deserved. Precisely because this practical tendency was foreign to Goethe's

* "*Aber schrieb welche!*" I cannot find means, either in English or French, to give an idea of the brevity and grace of this. *Welche* is here equal to the Italian *quali—Ma quali scrisse!—Transl.*

whole character and being, and must of necessity be foreign to it, from the very endowments by which he was distinguished, he and Herder never could understand each other when subjects of this kind were discussed. On this single point, each was for ever a stranger to the other(35).

CHAPTER X.

Wieland lying in state. — His burial-day. — Goethe's "Natürliche Tochter." — Herder's opinion of it. — Goethe's opinion of Wieland. — Wieland's "Pervonte." — Character of Wieland's mind. — Effect of the sight of the countenances of departed friends. — Schiller's death. — Reverence of the German people for their poets.

WIELAND'S body lay in state today (Sunday, 24th of January, 1813) in Bertuch's house.

I had a long struggle with myself whether I should see him once more in death, or not. I passed the evening in a small circle, met to hear the *Natürliche Tochter* read aloud; but my heart was not there. I went home earlier than usual; it might be nine o'clock. I would not go whither my heart drew me: however, in the esplanade, I was seized with a longing which was resistless. The streets were thronged,

and as it were involuntarily, I followed the stream of people in the direction which it had taken towards Bertuch's house. How I went through the doors I know not; I only remember there were centinels before them. The beautiful floor of the room was covered with countless tapers. *Oberon*, *Musarion*, as I was afterwards told, were laid, together with the order of the Legion of Honour, on a velvet cushion. I saw nothing of all this. I saw only the coffin, and in it a countenance, noble indeed, but perfectly strange to me—a laurel crown had been placed upon its brow.

One other thing I remember—some one out of the crowd, I think Bertuch the younger, who was destined so soon to follow those heroes of our literature, Wieland and Herder, came up to me, and said in a melancholy tone, "We have sustained a great loss;" and that as I heard these words, and beheld at the same time the old, fami-

liar face, formerly so cheerful and benign, now so solemn and sunken—so wholly changed—lighted by the gleam of the funereal tapers, an unutterable grief seized me; I could articulate no word, but was constrained to creep into a corner, and hide myself from the multitude to weep in silence.

These sorrowful thoughts followed me home, and occupied me a great part of the night. As at Herder's death, when the bells, which gave him their solemn accompaniment to the place of his long repose, first struck upon my ear, I found consolation only so long as the grief for so dear a loss could vent itself in tears.

Monday, the 25th of January, the day of the Conversion of St. Paul, was Wieland's burial-day. The body was sent to Osmannstadt, to be buried in his garden, by the side of his wife and Sophia Brentano.

I was too deeply affected to be able to join in the procession. Besides, I had

promised to go in the afternoon to Goethe, for whose health we had more than ever to fear, in consequence of this event. He was indeed intensely affected by Wieland's death, as I have remarked above.

I accidentally fell upon the mention of the *Natürliche Tochter,* which, as I have just said, I had heard the day before, and asked him if we might look for a continuation of it. Goethe was silent awhile, and then answered, "I know not, in truth, whence the external circumstances necessary for the completion of it are to come. I, for my part, have much reason to regret having been induced by Schiller's persuasions to depart from my old principles. In so far as I have allowed a mere *exposé* of this poem to be printed (for I cannot claim any other name for what is now before the public) I have robbed myself by anticipation of all pleasure in my work. The absurd criticisms and opinions which

I may have to hear, on this plan of proceeding, will be added to my annoyances. In short, I am so out of love with this work myself, that I am half resolved to destroy the sketch of the whole which is among my papers, that no unauthorized hand may get hold of it after my death, and attempt an ill-judged continuation of it."

I remarked, by way of soothing Goethe's discontent, what Herder had said to me of this tragedy, and concluded with his very words. He called it "the most precious, ripe, and perfect fruit of a profound, reflecting spirit, which had silently brooded over the monstrous events of our times, and had illustrated them for high intents, which the many were indeed, at present, scarcely capable of comprehending."

"If that is the case," interrupted Goethe, "let me repeat what I was just saying; where are we to find the fitting cotemporaneous circumstances for the continuation

of such a poem? What is concealed in that mysterious closet? What had I in view in bringing back the prince's daughter to a private station? On these points we will go into no further explanation; let the Torso itself, and time—if the gloomy spirit of party, which spreads and moves in a thousand different directions, allows any calm for contemplation—answer for us."

"It was exactly from these points," said I, "that Herder expected a well thought-out continuation and development of these certainly rather epic than dramatic materials. The scene where Eugenia plays so innocently with her jewels, while a portentous destiny which hurries her to another portion of the globe, is hovering over her, Herder prettily compared to a poem in the Greek Anthology, in which a child has fallen quietly asleep beneath a mass of rock, which is nodding to its fall." "On the whole, however," added he, "Goethe's sil-

ver-pointed pencil is too fine for the present public. The strokes it makes are too delicate, too little striking, too etherial, I might almost say. The eye accustomed to the coarse, gaudy scene-painting of our day, can by no means contract its gaze sufficiently for the perception of any accurate delineation of character. The present literary world, indifferent to correct drawing or truth of character, likes its artists to use a well-charged painting brush."

"The old man saw that well and truly," said Goethe.

"Herder," resumed I, "wished nothing more earnestly than the completion of a work which, for its simplicity and delicacy and the pearly smoothness of its diction (to use his words), he would not have exchanged for any of those productions which, floating in a blaze of colour, too often conceal the indistinctness of their outline by the splendour and glare of their tints."

At this Goethe said he would it were so, and that Herder's wish were fulfilled; "but now," added he, a minute after, "it is too late for both of us. I shall as little finish this poem, as Herder will read it."

Unconsciously our conversation fell again upon Wieland, "to whom," as Goethe remarked, "alone it was granted to give his writings to the public piece-meal, as he did in the *Deutsche Mercur*, without having his pleasure in his work destroyed by the absurd criticisms of the multitude with whom he thus brought himself into contact. He altered them, too, to please the public, which, where the work is out of one font, I can by no means approve."

"To dissipate gloomy thoughts, which the times excited, we lately took up *Pervonte* again. The plasticity, the gay luxuriant spirit of this poem are *unique*, inimitable—nay, quite inappreciable. In this, and similar productions, it is the display of

his own native character which causes our greatest pleasure.

" This matchless humour, when the fit came over him, was so rich, so prodigal, so extravagant, that it hurried its lord and master whithersoever it willed. He might preach, as he would, a thousand things about morals, manners, and social decorums and proprieties; and lay down endless inviolable rules and laws for himself, and others who resembled him;—they were all in vain, when he came into the fire, or rather, when the fire came over him: and then he was really himself—he was that which he ought to have been ever;—then it was that the beauty, the grace, the inimitable charm of his nature appeared.

" I remember hearing him read one of the first stories in the 'Arabian Nights,' which he had put into verse—that in which 'Fish, fish, do your duty,' occurs. In this first sketch all was so odd, so deliciously

wild, absurd, and fantastic, that I could not have borne the alteration of a line. Now how could Wieland find in his heart to offer such a sacrifice to that criticism with which he all his life tormented himself and others? In the corrected and complete edition the wild was compelled to become tame, the absurd, reasonable, the extravagant, sober.

"I wish I could persuade you frequently to read such poems as the *Pervonte* aloud in company. Some preparation is necessary. Wieland's verses should be read with a sort of rich vivacity, if one would ensure to them an instantaneous effect. The natural genius that breathes through them is matchless—all flow, all spirit, all taste! A smiling plain, without the smallest inequality or obstacle, through which the veins of a truly comic wit are seen winding their way in every direction; and, if the caprice by which he is hurried away so wills it, not sparing even their author.

"None—not even the faintest trace of that laboured, excogitated technicality, which makes a man's best ideas and feelings repulsive, by the artificial manner in which they are enounced, or destroys them for ever.

"This exquisite naturalness is the reason that whenever I have a mind thoroughly to enjoy Shakspeare, I read him in Wieland's translation (37).

"Wieland handled rime like a master. I do believe if one had shot down a cart-load of words on his desk, he would have found means to arrange them into a beautiful poem.

"As to the new school, and the motives which have led them to set themselves in hostility to Wieland, and to try to throw his well-won, time-sanctioned fame into the shade, I had rather say nothing. Their intentions were not, indeed, so bad originally; they wanted to bring a factitious enthu-

siasm into vogue, and Wieland's ridicule of all enthusiastics must certainly have been a very awkward impediment in their way. But let ten or twenty years pass over, and all these spots in Wieland, which have been so industriously hunted out and brought to light, will be little thought of; while the humourous, tasteful poet will maintain possession of that sunny place in the literature of his age, to which he possesses the strongest claim by nature (38).

"Being of an originally enthusiastic temperament (as is clearly seen in his *Sympathie eines Christen*, as well as in some other of his early productions), he lived in continual fear of a relapse, and had therefore prescribed to himself accurate, judicious criticism, as a preservative. Even the frequent recurrence to the same objects of satire proves this fact. The higher aspirations of his soul will not be silenced; and it often happens that where he tries to ridicule

Platonism, or any other so-called mystical dreaming, he exhibits it in all its beauty, and with the glow of a delightful inspiration.

" He subjected all to reason, and especially to one of her favourite offspring, criticism. On this road you come at no results. This is clearly to be seen in Wieland's last work, his translation of Cicero's letters. They contain the clearest and most felicitous expositions of the then state of the world, divided between the followers of Cæsar, and those of Brutus. They have all the freshness of a newspaper from Rome; but they leave you in complete uncertainty as to the main spring upon which every thing, in fact, depends. The reason of this is, that Wieland, in all he did, cared less for a firm footing, than for a clever debate. Sometimes he corrects the text by means of a note; but he would not be at all annoyed if another man stepped in, and again corrected his note by another note.

"But we must not be angry with Wieland for this; just this indecision it is which reconciles one to his jests; for earnestness ever embraces one side, and holds fast to that, to the exclusion of all lighter or more sportive views of the subject that may incidentally suggest themselves. The best and most delightful of his works arose out of this quality of his mind; and without it, his fantastic humour would be hardly intelligible. The same peculiarity which sometimes makes him obscure in prose, renders him most agreeable in poetry. Characters like Musarion received the whole of their singular charm from this cause."

When Goethe heard that I had looked upon Wieland yesterday in death, and had thus procured myself a miserable evening, and a worse night, he reproved me vehemently.

"Why," said he, "should I suffer the delightful impression of the features of my

friend to be disturbed by the sight of a disfigured mask? Something strange, nay utterly untrue, is thus intruded upon my imagination. I carefully avoided seeing either Herder, Schiller, or the Dowager Duchess Amelia, in the coffin. Death is a poor portrait painter. I, for my part, desire to retain in my memory a picture of my departed friends, more full of soul than their mere mask can furnish me with. I beg of you, therefore, when it is my turn, to do thus with me.

"Nor will I conceal from you that this was what was so remarkably delightful to me in Schiller's departure. Unheralded, without pomp, he came to Weimar; and without pomp did he depart thence. Parade in death is not what I like. The laying forth of the body is indeed a most ancient and venerable custom; needful for the people, and for public security. It is important that society should know not only that a

man is dead, but how he died. That people die, is a thing which it would be absurd to afflict oneself about; but it imports every one of us that no life be cut short before its natural term, whether by the rapacity of heirs, or by any other cause of violence."

In the midst of this conversation August von Goethe had come in. He had been, as his father's representative, to accompany Wieland's funeral procession to Osmannstädt. From his lips we learnt more particulars of the ceremony. Goethe commended the arrangement; especially that the solemnity had been attended by members of the government, and of both courts of justice.

"It is the last honour," added he, "which we have it in our power to pay to him, and to ourselves. It is a proof of a lofty and liberal tone of thought to use such occasionsfitly; and, if we do nought else, we give evidence to the world that we are not

unworthy to have possessed so rare a genius among us for a long series of years."

He made his son give him the most minute and accurate description of the interment, the precise spot in the garden, the stone, — every thing. Nor did he hear, without evident satisfaction, that more than five hundred persons from the surrounding villages had flocked together today, unbidden, to the grave of Wieland.

CHAPTER XI.

Goethe at Töplitz.—Arrival of Louis Buonaparte, King of Holland.— Their intimacy.— Goethe's opinion of Louis.—His benevolence and gentleness.—His genuine piety.—His moral sensibility.—Causes of his abdication.—His tolerance.

It was the tenth of November, 1810, shortly after Goethe returned from Töplitz, that he communicated to me the following circumstances relating to his stay there. I wrote them down immediately, exactly as he told them.

When the King of Holland arrived, he hired the house in which Goethe was residing. Goethe would have instantly quitted it, and have vacated the whole *étage*, but the king would not permit it, protesting that, at all events, he should not make any use of it.

Goethe had thus very frequent opportu-

nities of seeing him; indeed he lived with him for a considerable time, separated only by the door of a bed-room. My memory is sufficiently faithful to enable me to give an accurate report of his opinion of the king, having written down what he said the same evening.

"Louis," said Goethe, "is a perfect incarnation of kindness and affability; as his brother Napoleon is, of force and power. Strangely indeed are the qualities of the brothers of this family mingled and apportioned. Lucian, for instance, despised a crown, and occupied himself with art at Rome. The abdication of another crown, in such stormy times, seemed inevitable for the gentle Louis. Mildness and kind-heartedness mark his very footsteps. It was therefore no obstinacy, as has been imagined, that led him to take such a decided course in opposition to his brother. On the contrary, Louis is one of the gentlest,

most peaceful characters I have ever met with in the course of my life; but, as a natural consequence, every thing contrary to law, to justice, to humanity, wounds him to the inmost soul, and is revolting to his very nature. He cannot endure to see an animal tormented, a horse ill treated, a child unhappy; you see it in his demeanour, in every feature; his blood boils at it; it makes him unhappy to witness any ungentle word or deed; nay, even to hear it recounted. Inadvertent improprieties or offences directed against his own person, he forgives much more readily. A beautifully constituted soul; a tranquil, collected temper; in the back ground, God—without the least religious fanaticism;—these are Louis's first and most essential qualities, and go to form a perfectly unspoiled, genuine character, which is in no respect the result of training or teaching, but is the spontaneous and peculiar growth of his

beautiful nature. Religion shines like a silver thread through all his conversations and opinions; she brightens the dark ground of his somewhat melancholy views of life. Whatever event painfully touches his exquisite moral sensibility, thus immediately receives a gentle repulse. He rejects every thing which, according to his feeling, is unjust, and contrary to the divine commands. Hence necessarily arises a contraction of his judgement on many points; but this is abundantly outweighed by the serenity of a temper that not all the unhappy circumstances in which he has been placed could ruffle. The times are, in his opinion, most perplexed and evil; but it nowise follows that they will always remain so. One must on no account utter any maxim in his presence, which is in contradiction to any of his views of christian morality, or has a tendency to loosen its obligations; on such occasions he is silent, reserved,

and withdraws from the conversation;—always without strife or controversy.

"When he came to Töplitz he was so weak that he was obliged to be led, but he grew better. How so tender and sensitive a being could succeed in fighting through the hard battle between Holland and his iron brother, without having the whole texture of his nerves torn to rags, and becoming himself the victim, is a problem I never could solve! The force of mind which thus raised and supported him above conflicting circumstances is worthy of admiration. What he thought he owed to a renowned nation, as its chief; what to himself, after he was once recognized as King of Holland, he acted up to, in opposition to France and to his brother, with all that severe, moral earnestness which is part of his nature. From the moment that Napoleon spoke of the Scheldt, the Rhine, and the Maese, as merely the great arteries of the body of

the French empire; from the moment that he showed his utter disregard for the blood which the brave forefathers of the land had shed under Philip the Second, in order that Holland might be a nation, nothing remained to Louis but to quit a throne, the dignity of which he thought he could no longer uphold. This was no step set by him to excite attention or applause; on the contrary, the outward act was a mere expression of the most inward convictions of a being to whom tranquillity and the peace of a good conscience are the most inestimable of treasures;—far above the possession of a throne.

"And with this is connected another most delightful part of his character, which diffuses a singular charm over his society. You remark neither philosophy, nor an array of principles, nor any thing of the kind, in his conversation;—nothing that presents itself as harsh, rigorous, or mor-

tifying to those who think differently; it is rather pure, kindly nature which stands before us, and, yielding to its gentle impulses, discloses its own harmony and beauty. Principles imply logic, and give room for debate, doubt, and exposition; but genuine conscience knows only feeling, and goes straight forward to its object, which it tries lovingly to comprehend, and, when comprehended, never lets go again. Like the innocent flock, that seeks not to crush under foot the herbs or flowers which instinct teaches it are pernicious or poisonous, nor to tear them up with impatient rancour, but peaceably passes them by, and goes in quest of that alone which is its appropriate nutriment, and suited to its gentle, quiet nature; so did I contemplate the inclinations and aversions of a truly beautiful moral organization, before which all school-taught arts and systems must needs shrink back ashamed,

" I can say, that wherever in my life I have had the good fortune to meet with such a spectacle of true and perfect morality, it never failed to attract and edify me indescribably. As I used often to say to my friends at Töplitz, ' One never leaves the King of Holland without feeling oneself a better man.' After I had passed an hour or two in thus observing and listening to him, I felt my whole soul elevated, and said to myself, ' If this sweetly tender, and almost femininely-constituted being was capable of such things, under such overpowering public circumstances, shouldst not thou, in thy private station and narrow field of action, be capable of as much? or, at least, be able to gather courage and firmness from his example?'

" It may be anticipated that a mind of such fine moral perceptions, so formed to estimate every thing pure and noble, would have a sort of innate reverence for the cha-

racter of all the northern nations—their deeds and qualities. Hence I observed in the King of Holland a silent leaning towards Prussia and Saxony. We might question destiny—were there not other and deeper designs hid in the womb of time, than we are able to divine—why she made his brother Jerome, and not him, King of Westphalia.

" Earnestness, combined with pure morality, both exempt from the slightest harshness or severity; piety, free from all conceit, and from all gloom, from all dark alloy of fear, or of superstition; perfect rectitude combined with profound benevolence,—would not one think that this character was expressly made to form the most intimate connexion, nay combination, with all that is excellent or valuable in the German character? But it is true that even in circumstances so desirable in themselves, such native goodness of heart,

could in no case (consistently with the maintenance of Louis's connection with the French nation) long have had free and independent exercise; and that the matter must have ended there, just as it did in Holland. His kingdom is not of this world—still less of this age.

"In the king's society I met a Doctor whose opinions were somewhat characterized by abruptness; not to say, by catholic narrowness. He often talked of the Church which alone could ensure salvation. Such remarks were, however, never assented to by the king, who, as I have said, was as gentle as he was earnest and humane, and could not take part in any bigotry or onesidedness. I always tried to command myself on these occasions; once, however, when he thought fit to utter a tirade worthy of a capuchin (such as are now the fashion) on the dangerous tendency of books and of the press, I could

not refrain from answering him with the assertion, that the most dangerous of all books—if we must talk of danger—was, humanly speaking, unquestionably the Bible: for that a book could hardly be adduced which had had so powerful effect, for evil and for good, on the progress of civilization and the condition of mankind.

"I had no sooner uttered these words than I was a little alarmed at them, for I expected no less than that the mine would explode on both sides and blow me into the air. Fortunately the result was different to what I expected. The Doctor indeed turned first pale and then red, with rage and horror; but the king commanded himself with his usual mildness and sweet temper, and only said, '*Celà perce quelquefois, que Monsieur de Goethe est hérétique.*'

"While he lived at Amsterdam, the king had so perfectly adopted the feelings of a Dutchman, that he was extremely annoyed

at the general neglect of their mother tongue by people of condition, who scarcely spoke any thing but French. 'If *you* will not speak Dutch,' said he to some of them, half in jest, half in earnest, 'how can you expect that any body else in the world will give himself the trouble to speak it?'"

The reader will doubtless derive great pleasure from Goethe's description of so distinguished a cotemporary and so truly noble a nature; and will, at the same time, obtain a glance of the great poet's own beautiful mind, exhibited in his calm and masterly delineation of human character. It seems to me that, even here, the hand is not to be mistaken which drew Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles, with a pencil as bold as it was felicitous and delicate.

CHAPTER XII.

Kotzebue.—His "Most Remarkable Year of my Life."—Goethe's opinion of it.—Kotzebue's egotism.—His plays, "Banished Love," and "The Two Klingsbergs."—The "Corsen."—Kotzebue's intolerant vanity.—His "Tour in Italy."—History of his plot for the dethronement of Goethe.—The Exclusives of Weimar.—The Countess von E.—The contested ballad.—The rival ladies.—The Cour d'Amour.—Arrival of Kotzebue at Weimar.—Commencement of intrigues.—The temporal and spiritual courts of Japan.—Projected coronation of Schiller as first German poet.—Counterplot.—The most melancholy day in Weimar.—The inexorable Bürgermeister.—Triumph of the Patriarch.

In a conversation on literature, we fell upon Kotzebue and his "Most remarkable Year of my Life" (*Merkwürdigstes Lebensjahr*). Putting aside the adventures of the journey, and the hard fate of the man, which demanded and deserved compassion, it was, as Goethe affirmed, scarcely

possible, out of such rich and varied materials, to produce any thing more empty and inane.

"I am certain if one of us were to take a walk in spring over the fields, from Oberweimar to the Belvedere,* he would find a thousand times more of what is remarkable in nature to tell of, or to note in his sketch-book, than Kotzebue met with in his journey to the other end of the world.

"The reason of this is, that he is by nature incapable of getting out of himself and his own affairs, into any deeper or wider field of observations. When he arrives at a place, he gives himself not the slightest trouble about heaven or earth, air or water, animal or vegetable. Every where he finds only himself—his own sayings and doings; even at Tobolsk, you are perfectly certain that all the people are occupied either in

* A palace of the Grand Duke.

translating his plays, studying, acting, or, at the very least, rehearsing them.

"Not that I do not do justice to his extraordinary talent for every thing technical. After the lapse of a century, it will be perceived that the sense of form was really born with Kotzebue. Pity only, that character and keeping were utterly wanting. A few weeks ago I saw his "Banished Love" (*Der verbannte Amor*), and the performance gave me extreme pleasure. The piece is more than clever; there are traces of genius in it. The same applies to "The two Klingsbergs" (*Die beiden Klingsberge*) which I hold to be one of his most perfect dramatic works; for he is always more happy in the delineation of *libertinage* than of any true beauty of character. The corruption and profligacy of the higher classes is the element in which Kotzebue outdoes himself.

"His *Corsen*, too, is worked up with

great dexterity, and the handling is all of a piece. They are great favourites with the public, and with reason. Of course, as usual, you must not ask much about the *matter*. However, technical excellencies of this kind are by no means so common among us Germans that they should be taken no account of, or be contemptuously overlooked.

" If Kotzebue had had the good sense to keep himself within the circle prescribed to him by Nature, I would be the first to defend him against unjust reproaches. We have no right to demand of any man things which Nature has not afforded him the means of performing; but the worst of it is, he thrusts himself into a thousand things of which he understands not one word. He wants to carry the superficiality of a man of the world into the sciences; a thing which Germans, unquestionably with great justice, hold to be wholly inadmissible.

"But even this fault might be overlooked if he did not, withal, fall into the most unheard-of vanity. Which is the most extraordinary, this or the *naiveté* with which he displays it, I shall not stop to enquire. He can suffer nothing of any celebrity about him, or near him, were it a country, a city, a statue. In his 'Tour in Italy' (*Reise nach Italien*) he has abused the Laocoon, the Medicean Venus, and the poor Italians themselves, in every imaginable way. I am perfectly sure that he would have found Italy far more tolerable if it had not been so celebrated before he visited it. But here is the knot! He is half a rogue; but the other half, especially in what relates to philosophy or art, an honest man; and he cannot help trying to gull himself and others wherever he can; and that, too, with the loftiest and most gentlemanly air."

This may, perhaps, be an appropriate place for introducing a little story which had no slight influence in the subsequent production of the "Freethinker" (*Der Freimuthige*). We will relate the whole affair, beginning by a *bon mot*, which Goethe let fall concerning Kotzebue, and which, having been kindly conveyed to the ears of the latter, laid the groundwork of the whole of this history,—a more amusing one than Kotzebue's *Aufenthalt am geistlichen Hofe zu Japan.*

It happened, about the time of Kotzebue's arrival at Weimar, that a society of distinguished persons of both sexes met weekly at Goethe's house, on the plain by the Frauenthor, and formed one of the choicest circles in the little Residency. With the exception of Schiller, Goethe, and Meyer, the members of it were chiefly ladies. Its most remarkable ornaments were Countess and *Hofmarschallin* (court-mar-

shalless) von E——; Fräulein von I——n, one of the maids of honour; Fräulein von W——; Frau von Schiller; Frau von Wollzogen; and Amalie von Imhoff. From the very elements of the compound, it is easy to see that the grace and delicacy of feminine manners formed as striking a characteristic of this refined society as the genius and talent of the men.

The great preponderance of the ladies had also the effect of giving a strong tinge of the Romantic to the laws they imposed on themselves. Every knight was compelled to select one of the ladies of the party as the object of his homage; to devote himself exclusively to her service, and to lay at her feet those delicate offerings of love and fidelity which the laws of chivalry require from all true knights.

Inclination, early preference, and mutual esteem, had fixed Goethe's choice on the lovely, amiable, and intelligent Countess

von E——. It will be understood, of course, that, as the knights and old master-singers of the Wartburg lived anew in this circle on the Ilm, each must celebrate the charms of his mistress — a task not very difficult to Goethe. His beautiful song,

"Da droben auf jenem Berge (39),"

in which a spirit of plaintive tenderness, and the deep quiet feeling of mountain solitude breathe from every line, owes its origin, as it is said, to this society.

But as seven cities contended for the honour of Homer's birth, so do Jena and Weimar dispute the production of this ballad. Thus much is certain,—that Goethe brought this elegant trifle one evening into the accustomed circle, and, like a true knight, reverently laid it at the feet of his lady. Could any one have stronger claims to it than the Countess von E——?

But what was the sequel?

Some time afterwards, came another lady

(also distinguished for her talents) from Jena.

Goethe was certainly often in Jena, and was peculiarly fond of passing the early days of spring there. Spite of the inconsiderable distance from Weimar, leaf and blossom unfold themselves there at least a fortnight sooner. Now the very beginning of the song, "*Da droben auf jenem Berge*," alluded to his being on the hills of Jena; for, unfortunately, we have but one at Weimar, the lofty Ettersburg; whereas Jena, which is most romantically situated, reckons at least twenty or thirty in its environs.

But this is not all. The accomplished fair one of Jena not only came to Weimar, but, from a strange concatenation of circumstances, visited the Countess von E——.

The conversation soon fell upon Goethe, his love for Jena, his willing visits to it, and especially the pleasure he expressed at being a guest in the house of this lady.

"And," continued the real or supposed favourite, "we have, among other things, to congratulate ourselves on the production of a song which is one of the prettiest, the most simple and graceful, that ever flowed from the pen of a poet."

The curiosity of the Countess von E—— was, naturally, strongly excited by this prelude, and she enquired the title of the song. The answer was like a thunder-clap pealing down from the mountain-tops on those standing under the blue heaven and in the bright sunshine.

The Countess was, however, too much a woman of the world to lose her self-possession. She hastened with her discovery to her faithless poet, overwhelmed him with the most charming reproaches, threatened him with a formal appeal to the laws of that *Cour d'Amour* of which he was so great an admirer, and by which he was expressly forbidden to offer his homage to

more than one lady: she more particularly insisted on a charge the most cutting to Goethe as a poet;—the poverty of invention which would lead him to employ the same love-letter to express his devotion to more than one of the sex.

Goethe expressed the deepest penitence, promised reformation, and could not but assent to the justice of all the reproaches heaped upon him by the lady of his heart.

Thus delightfully was this little society governed and held together. But it was destined soon to experience a shock.

Herr von Kotzebue had returned to Weimar. Fräulein von I——n, lady in waiting in the court of the Dutchess Dowager, had made known in every possible manner her wish that he should be received into the *cotérie* in question. She succeeded in drawing over some members to the same interest. Under these circumstances, especially as Schiller and Goethe were ex-

tremely anxious to preserve the hitherto good understanding of the party, and saw the storm which was gathering in the distance, a new article was added to the statutes, enacting, "That no member should have the power of introducing another person, whether a native or a stranger; at least not without the previously-expressed unanimous consent of the other members."

That this law was in fact aimed at Kotzebue could be a mystery to no one; but this must have been the more mortifying to him, since, being in Weimar, it was a sort of point of honour with him to be admitted into this circle. His vanity had received another wound from a chance joke of Goethe's, which had, of course, been immediately repeated to him. It is well known that in Japan, besides the temporal court of the Emperor, there is the spiritual court of the Dalai-Lama, or Patriarch, which often exercises a superior though

secret influence. Now Goethe had once said, jestingly, "It is of no use to Kotzebue that he has been received at the temporal court of Japan, if he cannot contrive to get admitted to the spiritual." Unquestionably Goethe could mean nothing by this but the little exclusive circle of which he and Schiller were the heads. However, with a man of such intense and irritable vanity as Kotzebue, it was throwing oil on the flames. Indeed he affixed a much too serious meaning to the words of a great man, thrown out in a moment of exuberant gaiety.

He now formed the determination, if he could not undermine this circle, at least to establish another "spiritual court," in opposition to it. To become himself a Dalai-Lama, or Patriarch, in such a place as Weimar, was out of the question; he had too much sagacity to attempt it; but to cause Schiller to be formally proclaimed head of

German poetry, while he himself modestly kept in the back ground, this might produce an effect which might conduce to the desired end. Many accidental circumstances conspired to favour the project, and its author knew, with his usual address and cleverness, how to turn them to account.

In consequence of a somewhat equivocal explanation of Goethe's, a mutual coolness had lately prevailed between the ladies and the gentlemen of the *cotérie*. Goethe at last grew so out of humour at the pertinacity with which the former, half in jest and half in earnest, incessantly returned to the charge in favour of Kotzebue, that he expressed himself as follows:

"Laws once recognized as valid should be steadily adhered to; if not, it would be better to break up the society altogether, which perhaps would be the more adviseable, since any very long-continued constancy is always difficult, if not tedious, to ladies."

Another fresh coal on the fire, which was now fed on every side! The ladies manifested great sensitiveness on this point. One of the most beautiful and captivating had given vent to her indignation against Goethe in a parody on the humour of Walleinstein:

"Wenn Seel und Leib sich trennen,
Da wird sich zeigen wo die Seele wohnt (40)!

At the same time, some most unexpected difficulties presented themselves to the representation of the *Jungfrau von Orleans* at the court theatre at Weimar, so that Schiller was obliged to go to Leipsig before the performance could proceed. The iron was now hot, and only awaited a dexterous hand to hammer it into form. Far and near, through the whole country, no fitter hand could have been found than that of the clever workman who at this moment coming, as if summoned express, from foreign parts, arrived at the court of Japan,

and was destined to act a distinguished part in the plot. It is indeed difficult to say, as circumstances turned out, whether the furnace, so well stocked with bellows, made the first advance to him, or he to the furnace.

With the same quickness and dexterity with which Kotzebue wrote a new comedy or tragedy in a week, and produced it instantly on the stage, he now drew up the scheme of a fête to celebrate the coronation of Friedrich Schiller, not exactly in the Capitol, but in the Stadthouse of Weimar.

Scenes from the finest tragedies of the great and original poet, the *Don Carlos*, the *Jungfrau von Orleans*, *&c.* were to come first. Spoken in the costume of the persons of the drama, they were not only to serve as an introduction to the whole performance, but to prepare and attune the minds of the audience for the grand *coup* which awaited them.

The amiable Countess von E——, the

chivalrous-minded lady whom Goethe had celebrated, and done homage to, as his sovereign mistress, in so many an elegant and intellectual society, but who in her indignation now took occasion to repay the infidelity of the "*Schäfer auf jenem Berge*," willingly undertook the part of the Maid of Orleans. The Fräulein von Imhoff, the distinguished author of the "Sisters of Lesbos" (*Schwestern von Lesbos*), could not possibly refuse to appear as the representative of the lovely and unfortunate Queen of Scots. The amiable Sophia Mereau, another very sweet poetess, known to fame in "Schiller's Almanack," was, if I mistake not, to recite the Song of the Bell (*Die Glocke*).

Kotzebue himself was to appear in two characters; first as Father Thibaut, in the "Maid of Orleans," and then as the Master Bell-founder. In the latter character he was to strike the mould of the bell, which

was made of pasteboard, with his hammer, with such force as to break it in pieces. This moment, which, in the real scene, discloses the smooth and perfect metal within, was to exhibit to the spectators the grand and critical point for which all was so skilfully prepared. As soon as the Master had given the last stroke, the mould was to fall into pieces, and to surprise them with the sight of Schiller's bust, which, in the presence of Schiller himself, was to be crowned—by fair hands, of course.

The picturesque disposition of the whole representation was under the direction of Herr Krause, a landscape-painter of some merit, long attached to the court of the Dowager, and director of the Ducal Academy of design.

After all these happy suggestions and contrivances, who could doubt that the result would be most brilliant? I would have staked my life upon it, and should sooner

have dreamt of the sky falling, than of the total failure of so admirably-contrived a festival of art.

Accordingly, the most laudable activity reigned in all the first houses in Weimar. Dresses and parts, trimmings and passages from Schiller, were so carefully selected, so tastefully cut out and put together, that an elegant and well-rounded Whole grew into existence.

Meanwhile the appointed day grew nigh. Wieland, the most obliging of men on such occasions, was already invited, and had accepted the invitation.

Means had also been found to obtain a promise from the Princess Caroline (afterwards hereditary Princess of Mecklenburg, whose early loss all who knew her amiable qualities deplored, and for whom Goethe had a singular respect), that she would be present. Friedrich Schiller too was most pressingly invited, but said a few days be-

fore in Goethe's house, "I shall send word I am ill." To this Goethe made no reply, and remained perfectly silent.

There were not wanting, however, prudent friends, who, to their great regret, could not help foreseeing that these affairs would bring about a coolness between these two great men. The end of it could hardly be foreseen, especially in case Schiller should fall into the toils set to catch his noble, simple character. The preparations for the festival had now gone to such a length, that it was thought expedient to proceed to an epistolary treaty with the directors of the library, concerning the bust of Schiller; for this bust (which is still to be seen there), executed by Danneker, and, if I mistake not, presented to the library by Goethe, was to serve for the *coup de théatre* already spoken of.

The treaty was conducted by the two professors and painters, Meyer and Krause.

But here arose an unexpected and ominous difficulty, which the worthy Krause at least was quite unable to remove.

Meyer shortly remarked, in his answer to Krause's request, " that the rules of the library, as was well known to every body, would by no means permit him to suffer a work of art, of such value and merit, to be removed, especially to a place where the very nature of the entertainment must occasion a certain degree of confusion and tumult. It might also be suggested whether, as a question of good taste, Schiller would really feel himself so much honoured by a representation of his idea of the ' *Glocke*' in pasteboard, as seemed to be expected."

A piece of lighted tinder thrown into a powder magazine could hardly cause greater consternation than this note produced among the ladies and gentlemen who were impatiently expecting a favour-

able answer to their petition. Meyer, as an old and intimate friend of Goethe, could not, it was said, write or act otherwise. That was so clear and manifest that a child of any sense would have foreseen it, especially when it was remembered that Goethe himself was one of the great supporters of the library of Weimar.

Be that as it might, the question was now agitated whether it would not be more easy to get possession of Schiller himself, for the solemnity, than of his bust. But, violent as was the first shock to all hopes and wishes, it was nothing to the one which awaited them.

The day before that fixed for the performance, the parties interested wrote a polite letter to the chief acting Bürgermeister, Schulze, to request him to send the key of the new stadthouse, in which the whole of the splendid spectacle was to be exhibited.

The answer, written in the name of the magistracy, was truly official, but by no means agreeable. It purported, "That the erection of a stage in the new hall of the stadthouse was perfectly inadmissible;—that it would injure the walls, the roof, and the floor, which was newly laid: the magistrates regretted extremely that, under these circumstances, they could not comply with the request," *&c. &c. &c.*

All representations, all assurances of care, nay, even an engagement to repair whatever damage might ensue, were vain, and were utterly unable to bend the stubbornness and pertinacity of the acting Bürgermeister. To the most moving entreaties, he, with immoveable calmness, opposed the rigorous execution of his duty; in short, the heart of this high official personage, though beset with storms of every kind, remained impregnable, and as close shut against all assaults as the door of the new

stadthouse,—the key of which he held in his hand.

Rarely has so melancholy, so disastrous a day risen on the gay world of Weimar. To see the fairest most brilliant hopes thus crushed at a blow, when so near to their fulfilment, what was it but to be wrecked in sight of port? Let the reader but imagine the now utterly useless expenditure of crape, gauze, ribbons, lace, beads, flowers which the fair creatures had made; not to mention the pasteboard for the bell, the canvas, colours and brushes for the scenes, the wax candles for lighting, *&c.* Let him think of the still greater outlay of time and trouble, requisite for the learning so many and such various parts; let him figure to himself a captivating Mary Stuart, a majestic Maid of Orleans, a lovely Agnes, so suddenly so unexpectedly compelled to descend from the pinnacle of glory, and, in evil moment, to lay aside crown and

sceptre, helm and banner, dress and ornament—and he will admit that never was fate more cruel.

In these days of universal mourning in Weimar many a white pair of hands were to be seen supporting a pretty head, through which the most gloomy meditations on the disappointments of the world, the mockeries of fate, and the perverse current of human affairs, were crouding.

The whole transaction gave birth to a charming little mock-heroic poem, in the style of Pope's "Rape of the Lock," or Gresset's "*Vert-Vert*."

Think only,—three queens of hearts thus undeservedly deposed in one day! No—he who is not moved by so dire a mischance, which followed the Muses and Graces into their own seat—he can never more claim rank or title in this our German republic of letters.

Less compassion seemed due to Father

Thibaut, who, though a great master of intrigue, had for once found a greater master still. The whole affair, if well handled, might furnish a theme for something extremely diverting.

As the Patriarch of Japan had predicted in the beginning that the Spiritual Court would maintain its supremacy, even so it happened. The means which were employed, and the first invisible threads which eventually united to form a web of inextricable difficulty for the adversary, are indeed, as in all cases where chance plays the first part, veiled in a sacred obscurity from vulgar eyes. But, on the other hand, it was impossible not to admire the activity and skill which, under the form of a bell, sought to conceal a mine by which the Patriarch of Japan and his whole court were to be blown into the air.

The plot was, however, discovered in time by the venerable chief and his friends,

who found means to defeat it by a secret and silent countermine. Father Thibaut was indeed no less amazed and confounded when this thunderbolt fell, than of yore, when, as the bells were ringing in celebration of the coronation feast at Orleans, lightning struck the tower of the cathedral, at the very moment he was about to enter it, with the laudable design of denouncing his daughter as a witch.

Should history ever record the fierce siege laid to the fortress of the Patriarch, and its skilful and successful defeat, it is to be hoped the historian will not forget to make honourable mention of Bürgermeister Schulze's gallant and obstinate defence of the Stadthaus hall.

Frau von W——, Schiller's sister-in-law, the distinguished author of *Agnes von Lilien*, on hearing that, shortly after this affair, Kotzebue received the title of *Rath* (Councillor) of Weimar, said very wittily,

in allusion to a passage in the "Death of Wallenstein" (*Wallensteins Tod*), "His diploma ought to have been subscribed, *Rath Piccolomini*."

With what animation and enthusiasm Goethe's aspect, even at a very advanced period of his life, inspired the young, may be seen in the following remarkable letter of a boy of sixteen:

"Weimar, February 20, 1822.

"Dearest Friend,

"I should have written to you long ago; but I delayed from time to time, because I would not write till I had seen Goethe, for a glimpse of whom I had so longing a desire.

"For two months I walked past his house every day; but in vain. It was indeed a great delight to me even to see his daughter-in-law with her lovely children at the window; but I wanted to see Goethe himself. One Sunday I had been taking a walk; my way home lay at the back of Goethe's house, by his garden. The garden gate stood open, and curiosity tempted me in. Goethe was not in the garden; but in a short time I saw his servant come in. I shut the garden gate for fear the man should see me. As I was thinking afterwards, very sadly, how all my endeavours to see Goethe had failed, I suddenly remarked another garden gate which likewise stood open; and as I entered at it, I soon perceived that this was the neighbour's garden, the wall of which abutted on Goethe's, so that the walks of both were clearly to be seen from it. The circumstance was so propitious that I suddenly took courage, and asked the man

to whom this house belonged, whether Goethe often walked in his garden, and at what time of day? He answered, every day, when the weather was fine: the hour however was not always the same—that often at ten o'clock, if the sun was out, the *Geheimrath** was there; but that about noon, especially, he loved to be in his garden. The old gentleman held, as it seemed, with the hottest of the sunshine.

"Hereupon I questioned the good neighbour further, to see how he stood disposed, and whether he would give me permission to visit his garden daily for half an hour, that I might see and watch the Great Poet—the man whom I so deeply reverenced.

"He answered me, quite indifferently, 'Why not?—he could have no objection.' It is, however, wonderful, dear friend, that people must pay half a gulden to see a tiger, a bear, or a wild cat; while the sight of

* Privy Councillor.

a Great Man, the rarest thing of the world, is to be had for nothing! I went home full of joy; and that night could not close my eyes.

"It seemed to me as if I, little dwarf as I was, had suddenly, through this hope of seeing a Great Man, grown a hand's breadth at least. The morning I thought would never come;—the night seemed to me as long as a week, and longer. At length day broke, and brought the loveliest spring weather. When I saw the sun shine I thought,—this is a fine day for Goethe;—and I was not mistaken.

"It was past ten when I reached the garden. He was there already, walking up and down. My heart beat violently. When I saw him, I thought I beheld Faust and Gretchen in one person; at once so gentle and so majestic did he look! I had my eyes ever fixed upon him, that I might stamp his features well on my heart. And

thus did I look at him for a whole hour by the clock, with keen, unaverted eyes, without his being once aware of me—by which indeed he lost nothing. When I had thus, as it were, lost myself in him, he gave me the slip, and went into the house again, and up stairs into his study, which is quite separate, with windows looking into a back court.

"Dearest friend, be well assured, Goethe's greatness manifests itself in his whole form and aspect. He is still hale and active as a man of forty. His majestic gait, his straight and lofty forehead, the noble form of his head, his fiery eye, arched nose—all about him cries aloud, Faust, Margarethe, Götz, Iphigenie, Tasso, and I know not what besides. Never did I see so handsome and vigorous a man of so advanced an age.

"I see him, when the weather is fine, daily in his garden; and that is as great a

delight and amusement to me as it is to others to look at busts, and fine pictures, and beautiful engravings. You may believe me or not, as you please; but when I tell you that I had rather see him than all the engravings and pictures in the world, I tell you only the pure and naked truth.

"He usually goes up and down the garden-walks with slow steps, without sitting; but often stops over against some plant or flower, and stands still for half an hour at a time, observing or meditating. Could I but guess his thoughts and his discourse with himself at such moments! Then, when he turns away from the plants and flowers, he sometimes goes to play with his sweet grand-children.

"I speak with Goethe through my eyes, though he sees me not; for I stand behind a hedge, hidden from him by the bushes. This all sounds very strange and romantic, but it is truly thus. And, indeed, thus is it

well; and better than if I had really seen him and spoken with him;—*I* well know why. For suppose he condescended to talk with me,—what in all the world could a boy of sixteen, like me, be to him in conversation? He talk to *me!* He has something better to do, indeed!

"Oh, my most honoured friend, if you were but here for once—in the garden, and by my side! How happy shall I be when it is really spring; when the buds burst: then will I diligently watch Goethe's conversation with the flowers, and the birds, and the light, in his nearer intercourse with nature; and I will write you all that I know about it, and all that I can so much as guess.

"Your," *&c.*

NOTES.

Note 23.

The following notice of Kleist is extracted from the preface to Tieck's edition of his works, published at Berlin in 1826. I eagerly avail myself of the opportunity of gracing my little compilation with something from the hand of a poet whose rich and graceful fancy has so peculiar and so enchanting a character. His judgement of the unhappy Kleist has all the candid indulgence and tenderness which become a man of such genius.

"Heinrich von Kleist was born in 1776, at Frankfurt on the Oder. In his fifteenth year he entered the guards at Berlin as *Junker* (esquire, *i.e.* son of a noble house). He diligently employed his leisure hours, and particularly cultivated his talents for music, which were considerable. He served in the Rhenish campaign. After peace was concluded, he was dissatisfied with his situation in garrison at

Potsdam, and asked for his discharge, that he might have leisure and opportunity for study. The king, who took an interest in him, would have given him unlimited leave of absence; but this could not satisfy the impatient Kleist. He wanted to be a free man, and to devote himself exclusively to science. He again requested his discharge, and received it.

"As his early destination was a military life, it was natural that when, in his twenty-third year, he returned to Frankfurt on the Oder, to study at the university, he should find himself far before most of his fellow students in experience and reflection, but as much behind them in the requisite preliminary acquirements. This put him out of humour, and his hasty spirit tried to overleap every obstacle by which he felt cramped and impeded. His most earnest wish was now to become an useful servant of the state, and, after various plans, he was at length employed in the department of the Minister, Struensee.

"But his mind became more and more restless and perturbed. It is natural that most *autodidactoi* should estimate much too highly what they have learned in their peculiar, chance, and hasty manner. It is just as intelligible that, at other moments, when knowledge and study do not give them that tranquil satisfaction which softly en-

larges and imperceptibly enriches our souls, they should feel deep disgust and contempt for all knowledge, all thoughts, and all study; and should exaggerate the advantages of a visionary and impossible state of nature, over one of the highest culture and refinement. Kleist now devoted himself to the study of the Kantian philosophy with great zeal, but with a mind neither fitted by nature nor by previous training for such enquiries. The effect could be only unfavourable. He became more arrogant and exacting, without being at all more inwardly sure and steadfast. He now fancied it his duty to free himself from all public employment, and to live only for the highest science. He thought it a degradation to be a servant of the state, and to be hindered by his office from following his most sacred vocation—the culture of his own mind. His restlessness and passionate discontent became so great, that it was his most ardent wish to alter his situation at any price,—follow what might. As the equipoise of his mind was utterly destroyed, the most romantic plans seemed to him rational and good. He would go to France, and there—himself yet a learner—teach and disseminate the Kantian philosophy, instruct the French in the German language, and the like.

"With these notions, in the spring of 1801, he set

out on a long journey, with the feelings of one released from prison. His sister accompanied him. He embarked in considerable expenses, fully persuaded that this expedition would make him a matured and useful man, and reward his present sacrifices tenfold. He visited Dresden, Leipzig, and Göttingen, and went down the Rhine from Mainz to Cölln. On the Rhine he encountered a storm which threatened the destruction of the boat. His reflections, in a letter to a friend, on the near prospect of death, betray a diseased mind. In this state he reached Paris in the month of July. He was introduced to several men of science by the distinguished Alexander von Humbold; but in a short time, his eagerness to come thither, and his whole scheme, appeared to him like a delirium, and the physical sciences, which he imagined he came to study, were the objects of his contempt and aversion.

"At the close of the year, spite of all the remonstrances of his more judicious sister, he was fully resolved, as he thought, to take the small remnant of his property, which he had not consumed in this wild project, to Switzerland; buy a cottage and field, and live and die a peasant. He escorted his sister as far as Frankfurt on the Maine, and then actually proceeded to Bern, with a view of choosing his future residence. He lived for some

time in perfect solitude on the lake of Thun, and here first employed himself in poetry. But his spirit, long excited and perturbed, and labouring at his destruction, threw him on a bed of sickness. His sister returned to him, nursed him, and accompanied him back to Germany.

"In 1802, Kleist went to Weimar, where Wieland received the young poet with paternal kindness. Kleist remained for a considerable time an inmate of his house, and worked under his counsels at his *Familie Schroffenstein*. From Weimar he went to Dresden, and re-wrote his favourite tragedy, Robert Guiscard, which he had twice destroyed in disgust. Here he became acquainted with a man of remarkable and firm character, to whom he strongly attached himself, and who seems to have had considerable influence over him. They travelled together in Switzerland and the north of Italy, and returned by Lyons to Paris. The morbid state of his mind often displayed itself on the road. He was sometimes sunk in the deepest and most unaccountable gloom. In Paris this conflict of his soul ended in an entire rupture with his friend. In despair of himself, and of the world, he burned all his papers, and thus a third time destroyed a tragedy he had worked out with such partial affection. From Paris he went to Boulogne,

but was soon seized with a longing for his native country, and hastened homewards. In Mainz he was attacked by a malady which threatened to prove fatal, and detained him there six months.

"On his recovery he returned to Potsdam, and was again employed in the finance department. There he found the friend with whom he had quarrelled. They were quickly reconciled, and, with renewed zest, he turned to his poetic labours. In the course of a conversation in which he was entreating his friend to write a tragedy himself, the latter related to him the story of Kohlhaas, whose name is still borne by a bridge near Potsdam, and whose memory yet lives among the people. The incident affected Kleist, and he wrote the novel which is found among his tales.

"War had now broken out. After the battle of Jena every body fled from Berlin, and he repaired with the rest to Königsberg. His patriotic affections, and his intense hatred of the enemies of his country, now made him extremely unhappy: he secluded himself from all his friends and acquaintances, gave up his post, and remained shut up in his room without seeing anybody. At this time he wrote "The Broken Pitcher" (*Der zerbrochene Krug*) and translated Molière's *Amphytrion*, probably for amusement. During the war, he and

his friend returned to Berlin. By what means he incurred the suspicions of the French authorities, I know not; but he was sent to Joux, and lay for half a year in the same prison which had enclosed the celebrated Toussaint l'Ouverture. From thence he was conveyed to Chalons. In the loneliness of imprisonment he wrote a great deal.

"On his liberation, he repaired to Dresden, to live entirely for study. He wrote his *Penthesilea*, finished *Kohlhaas* and most of his other tales, and wrote his *Käthchen von Heilbronn*.

"The state of Germany,—her gloomy and threatening future,—depressed every man who loved his fatherland. This feeling,—rage at the insolence of the stranger,—grief at the want of unanimity among princes and people, and at the weakness which resulted from it,—took complete possession of the poet's mind;. all his powers were lost in hate of the oppressor. In this state he wrote *Hermann*.

"In 1809, the war against France broke out; all his hopes revived. He wrote his ode *Germania*, and went to Prague in the hope of aiding the good cause by his pen. Fragments were found among his papers, which proved his eagerness to arouse and to unite Germany, and to show the falsehood and the machinations of the enemy in their true light.

" From Prague he intended to go to Vienna, but the French army was already there; and during the battle of Aspern he was not far from the scene of action. He returned to Prague, and had another severe illness, which detained him for a long time.

" When peace was concluded, and all hope of the liberation of his country apparently at an end, he returned to his native land, and lived in Berlin. His family wished him to endeavour to get employment again, but he vehemently refused. He edited a weekly paper, the *Abendblätter*, corrected and finished his tales, and wrote his *Prinz von Homburg*, unquestionably his most mature and perfect work.

" In the year 1811 occurred the last scene of his melancholy history—too early for him and for literature, to which a higher and more enlarged culture would have enabled him to render far more valuable service. By his voluntary death, his country lost one of her noblest sons, just before her regeneration and the annihilation of those circumstances which preyed upon his mind.

" If we read these few details of his life with attention, and compare them with the feelings which all his works excite in our minds, more or less, we see distinctly that the poet was not in unison with himself;—that neither in reality nor in art, could

he find that happiness and serenity which are indispensible to production, and absolutely necessary to the bearing of the calamities and the joys of life. Seeds of this deep dissonance, this fierce conflict, which threaten life itself, sleep, indeed, in the minds of most men. Common men, however, are not oppressed and agitated by these contradictions in their nature—or, at least, not for long. Youthful discontent and restlessness are calmed down by some ordinary traditional calling, by the usages of the world, and by every-day employments and pleasures: on the contrary, the early histories of men who are led to science by inward impulse and enthusiasm, but more especially of poets and artists, have in them something remarkable, and yet all somewhat resembling, because all have, more or less, to contend with that melancholy which the contradictions of the ordinary world, and the unacquaintance with their own inward nature, produces. Generally speaking, a kinder destiny bestows that elastic spirit which lightens the wanderer's steps over these rocks; or the sicknesses of the fancy are healed by the fancy; or the lofty countenances of Nature, Religion, and Philosophy calm the beating heart; and it is granted to the Artist to live wholly, and with full soul, for his Art; so that he comprehends the world and all its shows out of his

inward sense; and life and its incidents refresh his spirit with ever-varying forms.

"But sometimes fate permits that the spirit should never find its resting place; that it should weary itself in struggles after the Better; that it should wrestle, alternately, with conceit and with despondency of itself, and, in chill disappointment and diseased susceptibility, understand neither itself nor others; such are the hypochondriacal spirits, who, allured by art and science, like Tantalus, thirst at the well-head of life. Seldom, however, does Nature show the cruel caprice by which talent, inclination, and character are involved in that fearful and confused strife which ends in self-destruction. And, among these rare instances, few so strongly claim our pity, our respect, and our sympathy, as Heinrich von Kleist.

"Living in most agitated times, it was impossible to his strong heart not to feel the pressure of the Present, in all its force. He was wholly German. The times flitted before him, like a spectre, so that he had no power to look steadily and with a clear eye on the Future. He brooded over the gloomy picture, till it haunted him like a frightful dream. Poetry was only a momentary balm to his troubled spirit—it brought no healing. The unhappy poet could not live in her, and there find peace; the Pre-

sent darkened even *her* radiant face, and she was unable to brighten the outer world with her mild lustre. His frequent attacks of illness were probably the consequence of these mental agitations.

"He could not find the place in life which suited him; and, with him, fancy had no power to indemnify for the loss of the Actual. And though he could not utterly despair of his genius, the small account taken of his works by a public which gave its favour to writers so every way his inferiors, must have disgusted and disheartened him.

"His sudden voluntary death was a severe shock to all his friends, as well as to all those who honoured his genius and his noble character. Shortly before his death, he had destroyed all his papers. A long essay, containing the history of the inward workings of his mind, must have been singularly interesting.

"The editor became acquainted with him in 1808, at Dresden.

"Heinrich von Kleist was of middle size, and strongly built. He was grave and silent—no trace of obtrusive vanity, but many marks of noble pride, appeared in his aspect and demeanour. He struck me as having some resemblance to the pictures of Torquato Tasso, and had, like him, a slight thickness in his utterance."

I subjoin to this biographical sketch some remarks on Kleist's works, which are little known in this country. My readers will recognize the same friendly and able hand to which I am already so largely indebted.

"Heinrich von Kleist is little known out of his own country—yet, without being a star of the first magnitude, he deserves to be attentively considered, for the characteristic merits of his works, and even for his irregular wanderings on a path which, after him, was trodden by several men of considerable dramatic talent. His early and tragical death renders him one of those imperfect creations which rather give indications of the presence of high powers, than display their thorough and complete development. The foregoing notice will have shown the unsettled, changeful, and broken character of his life. It has been seen how he retired from a military life, disgusted by its uniformity and constraint; how he then threw himself with ardour, nay, with a sort of voracity, into science; a choice which his restless temperament rendered no less unfortunate. He had thus no station, no place, in social life; this incessantly tormented him; the more, since his poetical works, in spite of all the talent they display, remained unnoticed;

or rather, people (absurdly enough) thought them half antiquated, because they were composed of two elements, one of which, indeed, belonged to past times—the German knightly romances; the second, and far more remarkable (namely, a blind, relentless Fatalism), owes its rise chiefly to him, though afterwards employed by others. It may be regarded as the prototype of the peculiar turn the German drama took after Schiller's death.

"The whole of this portion of German dramatic literature, (although from the year 1810 it has formed the reigning school,) is so little known in England, and so entirely alien from the spirit of the English drama, that it will be difficult to make ourselves intelligible in speaking of it.

"We will try, however, to give at least a faint idea of it. Schiller possessed the rarest qualities of mind, and took Shakspeare as a model; but his philosophy, and the civilization of his age, rendered him incapable of the simple, vast conceptions of the English bard: his knowledge of history, however, and, still more, his penetration into the psychological qualities of individual characters in history, was unequalled. Thus endowed, he went on his own way, undisturbed by the clamours of schools, or by the vagaries or suggestions of critics. He followed after the Highest with singleness of mind

and noble passion—and he reached it. His aim and plan were cosmopolitan, and he fulfilled them with such brilliant success, that his works belong not to his country, but to the world. But this cosmopolitanism drew upon him, in the midst of all his popularity, the disapprobation of those who continually required of the German drama something national or patriotic. Goethe had broken free from this exclusive German school long before Schiller, and had turned to antique models. The stage was thus left to talents of an inferior order. There was no one gifted with the power of drawing from the national history anything like Shakspeare's plays on the wars of the Roses. It must therefore be something new—peculiar; and, as the Romantic, the Wonderful, the Mysterious, ever exercised a singular sway over German minds, this was the most obvious instrument to try. On this field, Shakspeare's lofty simplicity could no longer serve as a model. Criticism, therefore, pointed to Calderon, placing his most perfect pieces in the foreground; such as *La vida es sueña*, and *El principe constante*, which obtained great popularity in Germany. An ill-understood piety, and an exaggerated admiration of the middle ages came into fashion. Poems and romances idealized those times in which Germany was so great and

so flourishing; in short, a dissatisfaction with the present, a looking back, a vague discontent, got possession of the public mind,—a state of things which may give birth to considerable, but never to pure, works of art.

"Such were the times in which Kleist lived and wrote. Of lyrical talent he gave no proof whatever; and this must always awaken some doubt whether the true poetic vocation existed. He began with works which are rather romances in dialogue than genuine dramas; they are very like German romances of chivalry. The *Familie Schroffenstein* is a production of this kind. It cannot be denied that there are single scenes of great beauty; but what a tasteless and injudicious use of a Fatalism justified neither by the example of Calderon, nor of the antients! This modern Fate knows no atonement by death; no deliverance, no elevation in the catastrophe, like that of the Greeks. It is a hideous family-spectre, that snatches greedily at life, and, without any psychological truth, destroys it. We have no scruple in expressing this unfavourable judgement, because Kleist afterwards showed he had the power to do better things. Tieck has suffered himself to be led too far in his defence of the national school, when he commends this play. Perhaps, however, he looked more at

the growth of the poet's mind than at the individual work.

"Käthchen von Heilbronn is not wholly free from this offensively spectral and fatalist character, which, here, springs out of the circumstance of unlawful birth, and thus inextricably entwines itself about the heroine; so that the crime which seems to provoke the wrath of Destiny does not proceed out of the mind or heart of the individual, but is a dark invisible power, extraneous to her, yet by which she is resistlessly hurried along. Käthchen's character, her love for the knight, are exquisitely simple and beautiful. The unalterable tenderness with which she follows him, spite of his neglect and scorn, and the patience with which she endures the most humiliating treatment from him, are most touchingly expressed, but we cannot deny that the conception appears to us revolting and untrue. For if she really loved him, his will must be her law, and she would quit him. The poet, however, makes it appear as if she were hurried on without any participation of her will; as if she followed him almost unconsciously. The part the knight has to play is, of course, strange enough; and, when it comes to light that Käthchen is daughter of the emperor, her destiny is fulfilled, and she dies a voluntary, or rather passive, victim;—

not from high resolve or tragic necessity, but led by blind fate. The explanation and atonement are, however, here laid before us, and the work gives evidence of great progress in the mind of the poet.

"In the interval between this and his *chef-d'œuvre*, the *Prinz von Homburg*, he devoted himself to the study of comedy, which had a very salutary effect in bringing him nearer to nature and to truth. He made a somewhat idealized version of Molière's *Amphitryon*. It is probable that his acquaintance with Shakspeare disgusted him with the monotony of French comedy, in which the plot is all in all. Jupiter and Alcmene are, in Kleist's representation, noble creations, instead of being mere persons of a comedy. In Kleist's work, a deeper idea lies beneath the transformation of Jupiter into the form of the husband; while the high and graceful tone of the dialogue, and the simple delineation of the conjugal relation, are strikingly poetical. We must, indeed, agree with Tieck, that he has produced something quite different from Molière's play; but what else could be expected from a self-formed poet, and a German? Can we regard it as a censure?

"Jupiter thus reproaches Alcmene for loving the mortal, and forgetting the true source and creator only of the feeling itself.

——————" Ist Er dir wohl vorhanden?
Nimmst du die Welt sein grosses Werk wohl wahr?
Siehst du Ihn in der Abendröthe Schimmer,
Wenn sie durch schweigende Gebüsche fällt?
Hörst du Ihn beim Gesäusel der Gewässer
Und bei dem Schlag der üpp'gen Nachtigall?
Verkündet nicht umsonst der Berg Ihn dir?
Der felszerstäubten Katarakten Fall?
Wenn hoch die Sonn' in seinem Tempel strahlt
Und von der Freude Pulsschlag eingelaütet
Ihn alle Gattungen Erschaffner preisen—
Steigst du nicht in des Herzens Schacht hinab
Und betest deinen Götzen an?"

Amphytrion, Act ii. Sc. 5.

TRANSLATION.

" Is He, indeed, present to thee?
Takest thou due note of the world, his great work?
See'st thou Him in the red glow of evening,
When it falls amid the silent thickets?
Hearest thou Him in the gush of the waters,
And in the song of the lovelorn nightingale?
Doth not the mountain proclaim Him to thee, in vain?
The roar of the rock-foamed cataract—in vain?
When the sun beams high in his temple,
And, attuned by the pulse-stroke of joy,
All creatures praise their creator,
Dost thou not descend into the mine of thine own heart,
And there worship thine idol?"

"These are indeed things of which Molière never dreamed. We give this passage only as characteristic of that metaphysical tone which the German poet loves to infuse into every thing.

"The farce of "The Broken Pitcher" (*Der zerbrochene Krug*) has breadth, drollery, and true comic vigour; but it has the fault of most English productions of the same kind—it is spun out.

"In almost all his novels (among which *Kohlhaas** has been mentioned) we find the same remarkable character, to which we have before alluded, of a mysterious Destiny, expressed in dim forebodings,—crushing, not elevating. The dark form of the curse rises continually before our eyes; yet the delineation itself is ever masterly, simple, impressive, and dramatic, even in the narrative

* It is probable that the strong political bias conspicuous in this most remarkable and interesting tale rendered it unpalatable to Goethe. For vigorous and affecting simplicity, dramatic effect, vivid air of truth, and profound moral interest, it may however, I think, stand the comparison with any work of imagination extant. The introduction of something of supernatural agency seems to me its only defect; but that might be detached without injury to the integrity of the narrative. It is totally unlike any story I know in German, and has the matter-of-fact tone, the rapid march, and the moral and political tendencies of an English one.—*Transl.*

form. Indeed, two of these tales were dramatized in Germany with considerable success. *Kohlhaas* by Maltilz, and the *Befreiung auf St. Domingo*, under the title *Toni*, by the celebrated Körner.

" We must conclude with his great work, the *Prinz von Homburg*.

" As we cannot presume on a general acquaintance with the story among English readers (a circumstance which greatly enhances the difficulty of our task) we must endeavour to bring it before them, as well as we can, by allusion. The incident on which it is founded has the nearest resemblance to that which formed the ground-work of an English play, in no other way worthy to be mentioned with Kleist's,—the first remarkable exploit of Captain Churchill (afterwards Duke of Marlborough). His was nearly the same fortunate offence against military subordination as that of the Prussian officer, Prinz von Homburg, who, when serving under the great commander Elector Friedrich of Brandenburg, at the battle of Fehrbellin, attacked the enemy contrary to orders. He gained the victory, but was ordered by the inflexible old general to be tried by a court-martial, and was condemned to death, though a prince, and nearly allied to the electoral house.

" The prince's crime, however, did not, like

Churchill's, arise from a keen military glance, and a conviction that he was right, but from a romantic abstraction of mind. He loved the elector's niece, Natalia, a woman worthy of her illustrious uncle—no trembling, sensitive girl, but a resolute, heroic being. She is firmer and stronger than the prince. She resolves to save him, because she knows she is the cause of his offence. She visits him in prison. He cannot believe that the elector really intends to put him to death. His life hitherto has been a happy dream of love; he is suddenly awakened to this fierce reality—he must die;—in the bloom of youth, in the pride of victory—won indeed by an error, but still won by him. He cannot believe it. But when he is at length convinced of the inflexible determination of the elector—he shrinks and trembles. This scene is infinitely beautiful—infinitely true. He is not ashamed to beg for pardon—he clings to life,

"Wie ein Kindlein an der Mutter Brust*,"

—in vain. This very supplication for life appears to the dauntless elector unmanly.

"His situation is rendered worse, and his fate apparently inevitable, by the enthusiasm of all the officers of the army in his favour. They present an urgent petition, signed by all the principal offi-

* Like an infant to its mother's breast.

cers, and by the princess, who is herself head of a dragoon regiment. Till now, the elector has in fact regarded the affair only as a necessary show of rigour. But now that his officers speak to him in a tone almost of menace, he becomes in earnest. He regards their remonstrance as an offence against the laws, and an act of mutiny against himself. He thought he possessed the implicit confidence of his army, he finds it opposed to him on a question of justice.

"The prince's death now seems to him duty, necessity. Princess Natalia knows her iron uncle, and sees that all is lost. Flight is the only resource. Meanwhile the prince has heard of the indiscreet zeal of his friends; he feels that they are wrong, and sees that the authority of government totters if he does not support it. He scorns the proffered escape, censures the conduct of the officers towards their sovereign, and is convinced that his *voluntary* death can alone atone for all these offences. He announces his resolution to the elector, and now prays for death more urgently than before for life. He thus fulfils the will of the veteran chief, and is pardoned.

"One singular feature of this drama is, that the opening and closing scenes are nearly alike, and form, if I may so speak, a colossal rime. At the close, the prince is crowned as victor, in reality, as, in the first scene in the castle garden in the night

before the battle, he is in a dream. The poet thought, by this fantastic fore-shadowing of the future, to give his work a poetical charm, of which it stood in no need. He rests so firmly on truth and nature,—he is so simple and so national,—the character of the elector, the intrepid hero, the rigorously just ruler, full of paternal feeling for his people, is so perfect,—that the work must disarm the most prejudiced criticism; and gives assurance that Kleist would have reached the highest point of his art, had not his career been cut short by his lamented death.

"At the beginning of this note we spoke of Kleist as the founder of the fatalist school of tragedy. We must by no means be understood as classing him with such writers as Müllner or Grillparzer, men who worked only for theatrical effect. Kleist is advantageously distinguished from them in *form*. His versification is inartificial—sometimes even harsh; and his language natural and simple. Müllner, Grillparzer, *&c.* on the contrary, labour to tickle the ear with rimes, *à la* Calderon. With these playwrights, who speak only in trochaics, Kleist has nothing in common. It is only to be regretted that he was infected with that morbid taste for the introduction of a boding and inexorable Fate, which was a disease of his times."—(*Ad. H.*)

Note 24.

For a full and very interesting account of Lessing's life and works, I refer my readers to Mr. William Taylor's Survey of German Poetry, vol. I.; which is also enriched with his admirable translation of Nathan the Wise.

I add a short extract from the philosophical dictionary of Professor Krug, of Leipsig.

"Although this variously-gifted and accomplished man influenced his age rather as a literary and æsthetical critic than as a philosopher, and has left no comprehensive or grasping philosophical work,—for his Nathan the Wise is only a philosophico-didactic poem, in a dramatic form, and his work on the education of the human race (*Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*), only a striking fragment from the great mass of science—yet he powerfully stimulated the public mind by his writings, especially by his æsthetic criticism, and his polemical theology; while, by his masterly style, uniting clearness, precision, and lightness with animation and vigour, he introduced a more tasteful manner of stating the *matter* of philo-

sophical disquisition. And for this reason, he is better entitled to a distinguished place in the history of philosophy than many pbilosophers by profession."—(*Allgemeines Handwörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften, nebst ihre Literatur und Geschichte.*)

It will be still more to my present purpose to give some of Goethe's own opinions of Lessing. Were there a tolerably faithful translation of the *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, I should be glad to refer to that, but unfortunately the work which pretends to be a translation has scarcely a resemblance to the original, and is one of the most flagrant specimens of literary dishonesty this country has produced. It is, I believe, a bad translation of a bad French translation. That a man should be found unprincipled enough to commit such a crime against the reputation of a great author, is no matter for wonder; the melancholy, and, at the same time, ludicrous part of the business is, that any English readers should have thought themselves qualified to judge of Goethe by the perusal of it.

The *Dichtung und Wahrheit* contains some invaluable matter on the history and character of German literature. The following passage is ex-

tremely difficult to translate. In the so-called 'Memoirs of Goethe,' parts of it are wholly omitted,—others so changed as not to retain a trace of the original meaning.

"By conversations, by examples, and by reflection, I came to the conviction that the first steps by which to emerge from the watery, diffuse, and '*null*' epoch, could be no other than definiteness, precision, and brevity. In the present style of writing, it was impossible to distinguish the Mean and Common-place from the Better, because all was levelled into one universal flatness. Some writers had already begun to make head against this wide-spread evil, and had succeeded, more or less. Haller and Ramler were marked by nature for compression. Lessing and Wieland were led to it by reflexion. The former was, severally, epigrammatic in his poems, close and terse in his *Minna*, laconic in his *Emilia Galotti*; it was not till a later period that he returned to that cheerful *naiveté* which became him so well in *Nathan*. Wieland, who had been prolix in *Agathon*, *Don Sylvio*, and his comic tales, became, in a wonderful manner, condensed and precise in *Musarion* and *Idris*; at the same time that he retained all his elegance. Klopstock, in the first cantos of the *Messiah* is not free from the charge of diffuseness; in

his odes and other smaller poems he is concise; as also in his tragedies. By his constant endeavour to emulate the antients, especially Tacitus, he became more and more compressed, till at length he grew unintelligible and unenjoyable. Gleim, diffuse, flowing, easy, by nature, scarcely attained to conciseness in his war-songs." * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

"One work, however, the genuine offspring of the seven years' war, full of perfect North-German nationality, I must mention with honour; it is the first dramatical work taken from real, significant life, specifically adapted to the times, and therefore producing an incalculable effect—I mean *Minna von Barnhelm*. Lessing, who, unlike Klopstock and Gleim, cared nothing about personal dignity, because he had full confidence in his own power of resuming and maintaining it at any moment, liked a wild, rambling sort of life, at inns and in the wide world;—he wanted some powerful counteraction to the constant and vehement labouring of his mind. This was what induced him to join General Tauentzien. It is easy to perceive that this play was written between peace and war, love and hate. This production it was, that happily afforded a glimpse of a higher, more significant world, beyond that merely literary and do-

mestic one, in which poetry (*Dichtkunst*) had hitherto moved*."

Further on, speaking of works of art, artists, and critics, he says:

"A young man, however, who hears elder men converse together on subjects already familiar to them, but with which he has only a slight and occasional acquaintance, and on whom thus rests the most difficult of tasks—that of allotting to every thing its due weight,—must needs be in a very painful situation. I, as well as others, therefore, looked around wistfully for some new light, and this was destined to come from a man to whom we were already so deeply indebted.

"There are two ways in which the mind may receive the highest contentment—by perception and by conception (*Anschauung und Begriff*). But the former demands a worthy object, which is not always at hand, and an appropriate state of mental culture, which has not yet been attained to. Conception, on the other hand, requires only

* It is hardly necessary to say, that *Dichtkunst, Dichtung, Dichter,* are never employed by Germans in the limited sense given to the corresponding words, *poetic-art, poetry, poet,* in this country, where they always include the idea of verse, and generally exclude all that is not verse.—*Transl.*

a certain susceptibility to the particular class of impressions*. It brings its own contents (or objects) within itself; and is itself the instrument of culture. Every ray of light which this most admirable thinker threw upon the dark clouds that surrounded us, was, therefore, most welcome.

" One must be young, to form an adequate notion of the effect which Lessing's *Laocoon*† produced upon us, inasmuch as this work bore us out of the region of barren perception into the free realms of thought. The so long misunderstood *ut pictura poesis*, was at once laid aside, the distinction between the Arts of Design (*bildende Künste*) and those of Language (*redende*), was made clear; the summits were severed, however the bases might unite. The painter or sculptor (*der bildende Künstler*) must ever confine himself within the limits of the Beautiful; but the artist whose instrument is language (*der redende Künstler*), who cannot dispense with every variety of

* This is a deplorable circumlocution for *Der Begriff will nur Empfänglichkeit*,—but I can find no better way of conveying the meaning.—*Transl.*

† A new translation of the whole or a part of this inimitable work has lately appeared, as I am glad to hear, in Blackwood's Magazine, from the pen of Mr. De Quincey.—*Transl.*

signification, may be permitted to range beyond them. The one works for the outward sense, which can be satisfied only by the Beautiful, the other, for the imagination, which may sometimes find pleasure even in the Ugly.

" All the consequences of this acute and admirable suggestion flashed upon us like lightning; all former criticism, whether perceptive or judicial, was cast aside like a worn-out garment; we fancied ourselves delivered from all evil, and thought ourselves entitled to look back with pity upon that glorious sixteenth century, in which German poets and sculptors had devised no better mode of representing Life, than under the form of a fool with cap and bells, Death under that of a dry skeleton, and had invested the inevitable Evil of the world with the features of a hideous, grotesque devil.

" What most enchanted us, was the beauty of that thought of the antients, which represented death as the brother of sleep, and gave them, as beseemed twin-brothers, the power of interchanging natures.

" Here could we loudly celebrate the triumph of the Beautiful; and though the Ugly could not be utterly driven from the world, we could banish it to the baser region of the Ludicrous.

"The grandeur, the importance of such fundamental and leading conceptions is apparent only to the mind on which they exercise their infinite activity;—is apparent only to the age in which they have been longingly waited for, in which they come forth at the fit and appropriate moment.

"Then do those who are formed to thrive upon such nutriment, delightedly employ whole periods of their lives in making it their own; they have within them the glad consciousness of a luxuriant growth; while men are not wanting who set themselves in instant opposition to such influences, nor others, who step in to quibble and cavil at thoughts so far above them.

"But as conception and perception (notion and sight) mutually aid and advance each other, I could not long work these new thoughts, without feeling an endless longing arise within me, once to behold more considerable and perfect works of art in greater number."

I am fortunate in being enabled to subjoin the following original matter.

"We may be permitted to add to the remarks which have been collected concerning this distin-

guished man, some in which we shall attempt to take a more general view of the character of his writings, and to look deeper into the sphere of his literary activity.

"It appears to us that every author ought to be viewed from two distinct sides;—first, according to his productions, and secondly according to his powers. The former are far from always affording accurate or conclusive tests of the latter. Accident, education, connections, exercise a tyrannous influence over the mental development, and he is a very one-sided critic who looks only at the fruits, without seeking to penetrate to the inmost germ of genius.

"'Erkenne erst, mein Sohn, was er geleistet *hat*,
Und dann erkenne, was er leisten *wollte**.'"

"If we look only at the principal productions of a poet, and neglect to study *himself*, his character, and the circumstances with which he had to contend—we fall into a sort of atheism which forgets the creator in his creation.

"Lessing is one of those authors of whom no competent judgment can be formed from the reading of the works by which he is chiefly known—

* Ascertain first, my son, what he has produced, and then ascertain what he desired to produce.—*Goethe. Künstlers Apotheose.*

they would afford but a half insight into his great merits. What he did as a critic, as a philosopher, is far more—and more yet, is what he was endowed with faculties to do. An unsettled, dissipated life, the wantonness of genial power, and extraordinary vivacity of temper, stood in the way of the self-concentration requisite to accomplish great things. Thus his philosophical notions are merely fragments, because he never could submit to the toil and application necessary to reduce them to a digested system. His fragment on the Trinity, his observations and arguments on the *Wolfenbüttler Fragmente eines Unbekaunten* (Wolfenbüttel fragments by an Unknown), his remarks on Spinoza, prove that he was capable of a depth and comprehensiveness, far beyond the spirit and the influences of his age. These are transient glimpses which his vigour and genius enabled him to catch, but which he had not the patience or application to follow out. It is impossible, however, not to wonder at his power of preserving such depth of thought in the midst of a life devoted to external activity and enjoyment far more than to recluse meditation, and at a time, too, when the prevailing tone of so-called enlightened society was that of sceptical contempt for all religious and philosophical questions.

"His connexion with the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, who was not nearly his equal in depth and perspicacity, had in this respect the most beneficial effect upon him. He raised the noblest monument to his friend by embodying his character and virtues in his delineation of Nathan the Wise—the Ideal of pure and perfect morality.

"We must add a few words on his poetical works. And we must premise, that the philosopher so preponderates in his nature, that he is not acknowledged by his countrymen as a Poet, in the genuine sense of the word. The modern critico-æsthetic school has more especially expressed this opinion*. Not that they intended by any means to depreciate his immense merits and services to literature and art. Their judgement was essentially just.

"The pure element of Art, perfectly unmixed with all didactic and philosophical ends, was unattainable to him. The only works which could possibly be quoted as exceptions, are his *Minna von Barnhelm*, and *Emilia Galotti*. But in both these, especially the latter, the moral tendency and purpose is rendered very prominent. *Emilia Galotti* is Virginius and his daughter in modern

* See Note 16, on Friedrich von Schlegel.

costume. The seducer is no Decemvir—he is an Italian prince. The whole story thus assumes the character of a private, domestic story; and the grand and beautiful back-ground which is formed by the Roman grouping, the patriotic interest, the liberation of Rome from her tyrants, is annihilated by the change. But the plan, the progress, and development of the piece are masterly, and Lessing has produced a great work out of meagre materials. The sharpness and clearness of his delineation of character are perfect, and during the whole course of the piece he never, for a moment, becomes tame, diffuse, or tedious. This is the more extraordinary, because he cannot wholly divest himself of a rhetorical tendency. He, however, curbs it, as beseems a declared antagonist of French declamation and bombast. It was, indeed, impossible for him to do without rhetoric, because (and that is the main point) he had not that depth of poetical resource which enables an author to compensate for the absence of it—to clothe a dramatic skeleton with flesh and colour, to give it life, and to invest the whole with that musical, harmonious charm, which Shakspeare pours with such unmatched profusion over his creations.

"Lessing's merit as a dramatic writer was, a

deep insight into the nature of composition, of scenic arrangement, and of the progress and conduct of a plot. On these points, no one can deny his mastership; nor can we deny him another essential quality of a dramatic writer,—knowledge of the human heart, and skill in the delineation of character. But here his power ended: his figures remain, spite of all these merits, somewhat frigid and inanimate; they are the offspring of reflection, of study, of calculation, of comparison, not (and that is the essential point) *not* of the imagination. Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* had a considerable, and not a favourable, influence on Schiller at the commencement of his dramatic career, as is manifest in his *Fiesco*, in which there is a good deal of declamation and tendency to *phrases*, though Schiller's richer fancy gave to his creation more of that life and warmth which carry away the reader.

"This is the point at which we can best touch upon Lessing's famous defence of Shakspeare, in answer to Voltaire. The merit which Lessing displayed in this controversy, as a critic, were alone sufficient to entitle him to immortality. The anatomical dissection of the dramatic art, the wit, the overpowering irony with which he triumphantly encounters the emptiness of the French drama, gave the first impulse to that of Germany, and

were the source and spring of the elevation it afterwards attained*. This must, therefore, ever remain Lessing's highest glory.

" The task was, at the time he undertook it, one of immense difficulty; it demanded the strength of a giant. The worship of Voltaire was thoroughly established in the world of letters; people conceived of nothing beyond the French tragedians; not to believe in them was heresy and crime. Into such an arena, and before such judges, did the unknown young man, in the humble character of a theatrical critic at Hamburgh, suddenly leap with armed hand—armed with a flaming sword—with Shakspeare. He attacked all the tastes and prejudices of the age, assailed the whole majesty of the French heroes *en face*, struck their paper crowns and helmets into the dust, and pointed out to his countrymen an author of whom they were almost ignorant, as the true model of dramatic art. The outcries of his adversaries did him admirable service; they excited attention to his attacks, which every week increased in vigour. At first the public knew not what to make of it. War was proclaimed against the old idols, and the new gods were almost

* In the *Hamburger dramaturgischen Beiträge,* a weekly paper.

unknown;—but doubt, enquiry, criticism, had struck root; people began to debate, to reflect; some men of learning pointed out the wide gulf which severed the French from the Greek tragedy; Wieland translated the hitherto unknown Shakpeare; and thus was the well-fought field gradually won, and Lessing's renown, *as critic*, fixed on an immoveable basis. Yet one word still remains to be said on Lessing's defence of Shakspeare. Whether he had the power of fully appreciating him,—whether he could so much as divine *Shakspeare the Poet*, is, spite of his gallant and immortal polemic for him, still a question. Lessing was so utterly unmusical—he was so completely and purely a being of understanding and of reason—so exclusively a thinker, that it seems impossible he could have thoroughly understood Shakspeare.

"The following anecdote is very characteristic of him. Being invited to attend the performance of a musical composition of consummate beauty and genius, he quitted the room soon after it had begun, saying, 'I cannot conceive how a rational being can find pleasure in this confusion of mere sounds, which afford no matter for thought.' We will not be unjust enough to apply Shakspeare's denunciation against those who have 'no music in

their souls,' to the noble-minded Lessing; that his whole life was the purest endeavour after truth is delightfully manifest in every line he wrote; but the inward melody, the acute sensibility, the tender longings, the flowery dreams, the sense of the romantic, were utterly denied him. He could, therefore, understand Shakspeare but on one side: and however exquisite was his perception of the technical and mechanical beauties of Shakspeare's magnificent compositions, it is to be regretted that he for a long while led Germany to admire, in the first of *poets*, only an unequalled knowledge of human nature, and a power of painting gigantic passions. This one-sided, distant, amazed admiration of the Gigantic in Shakspeare, was, for a considerable time, all that was felt for him. And this misapprehension of his real merit it was, which produced that host of *soi-disant* imitators in Germany, who were quite wide of the spirit of their supposed model.

"Goethe's Goetz of Berlichingen was the first visible proof of a greater approximation to an insight into Shakspeare; yet even in this, it is rude and partial. The sense of the true merit of the Great Poet was not awakened till much later. August Wilhelm von Schlegel was the man who, at the beginning of the present century, unclosed the sealed book.

" To conclude. Towards the end of his life—and this is the most beautiful close of earthly life, the fragrance that is wafted from the blossoms on the near grave—he seemed to become more tender and musical. His ' Nathan the Wise,' (though its matter and purport are certainly purely didactic and philosophical) is, of all his works, the most poetical: not because it is the only one written in verse, but from the pure idyllic tone of serene wisdom, the Bramin-like character, which breathes through it. The scope or aim (*Tendenz*) is truly prosaic, and only receives an imaginative cast from the eastern story of the three rings, on which it is founded. But in the perfection of the work, we nearly forget the purpose; and it is unquestionably his master-piece.

" The versification is flowing; and the more remarkably so, since the author first introduced the Iambic metre into the drama. The whole breathes an oriental air,—a pure, serene, and beautiful climate. It was the song of the swan. Happy the poet who can bid farewell to the world in so harmonious a strain!"—(*Ad. H.*)

Note 25.

Friedrich Justin Bertuch, born at Weimar in 1747, was one of the contributors to the *Deutsche Mercur*. He also wrote several dramatic pieces for the court theatre of Weimar. As chamberlain, he was associated with Baron von Echt, who, having been Danish ambassador in Spain, excited in him a curiosity after Spanish and Portuguese literature, which was then little known in Germany. His translation of *Don Quixote* was, at that time of day (1775), a remarkable performance. He also, in conjunction with others, published a Magazine of Spanish and Portuguese Literature. The *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, published at Jena, was first planned by him and Schiller. With his friend Krause, he published the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*. Bertuch was also actively instrumental in the establishment of the free school of design, over which Krause, and afterwards Meyer, presided. That his love forpoetry and art suffered no decline, was proved by his plan of the *Blaue Bibliothek aller Nationen*, an invaluable collection of the Fairy Tales, well — some of them admirably — trans-

lated, with illustrative biographies and characteristics. His services to literature and art were manifold. He lost his only son, the young man afterwards mentioned by Falk, in 1815.

Note 26.

For this note I am indebted to a friend. Wherever I have received such assistance I have ventured to mark it by the initials of the contributor. The public will see how numerous my obligations are.

"Lenz was born 1750, in Liefland, or Livonia. In 1770 he accompanied two young Livonian noblemen, as tutor, to the university of Strasburg, where he became acquainted with young Goethe, and was one of the first apostles of the new poetical light of Shakspeare and Nature, in opposition to the French drama, and its bad German imitator, the old, stiff, conventional school. Shakspeare had just been, we might say, discovered in Germany, and no one, perhaps, felt the immense influence which his works then exercised over the young and inspired

generation, more than Lenz,—indeed, he was its creature, and eventually its victim. Soon after the appearance of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*, he produced, in wonderfully rapid succession, his plays;—'the Tutor,' 'the Soldiers,' *&c.*; extraordinary productions, blending the Extravagant, Crude, and even Absurd, with touches of the greatest beauty, of deep knowledge of the human heart and of society, and of the sweetest tenderness of feeling. His style is straight-forward, bold, and energetic, though often rough, to affectation.

"However great his talents were, yet something sickly and mannered—a certain whimsicality—are discernible in all his compositions; they are not the production of a happy and thoroughly healthy mind; and a polemical tendency, more in the spirit of a poetical reformer than of a poet, betrays the revolutionizing impulse of that period, and of that strong excitement which was produced by Goethe's early works. His genius was soon exhausted, and he could no longer master the spirits himself had conjured up. In 1777 he had witnessed the death of a sister of Goethe's, and it affected him so much, that, soon after, he became raving mad. No writing materials were allowed him. A young boot-maker was his guardian; and the poor maniac grew so

fond of him, that he learned his trade from him. Some letters of his are still extant (in which he recommends his new friend to the patronage of a gentleman whom he formerly knew), abject and puerile, and touching proofs of the frail tenure by which man holds all that is his—even his intellect.

" He recovered,—but his genius was gone; his later attempts in composition are poor. He died at Moscow about 1780.

" Goethe describes him in his autobiography. But for this mention of him, he might now be entirely forgotten; some of his plays are even now lost. In 1828 Tieck published an edition of his works, as far as they could be recovered,—an edition graced by a masterly introduction from that eminent man, to which we have principally recurred for the present notice. It is most remarkable, as containing a complete exposition of the grounds of Tieck's opposition to Goethe."

C. K.

I add a translation of Goethe's account of Lenz. After a lively description of the vehement effect produced by Shakspeare on the young men at Strasburg with whom he associated, Goethe continues:

" If any one wishes to have a more perfect and

intimate knowledge of what was at that time thought, said, and done in that animated and excited set of young men, let him read Herder's Essay on Shakspeare; and further, Lenz's Observations on the Stage, to which a translation of Love's Labour Lost is annexed. Herder penetrates into the depth of Shakspeare's nature, and gives a masterly delineation of it. Lenz rather makes war, with the fury of an iconoclast, on the conventional and imitative character of our drama, and insists on every thing, every where, being treated after the Shakspearian manner.

"As I have been led to the mention of this extraordinary man, this is the place to endeavour to give some notion of his character. I did not become acquainted with him till towards the end of my residence at Strasburg. We saw each other rarely; his society was not mine, but we sought opportunities of meeting, and gladly interchanged the thoughts and feelings which, from similarity of age, we cherished in common. Small, but well and tightly built, with a most beautiful little head, to the elegant turn of which his pretty, somewhat truncated features, were perfectly suited; blue eyes, fair hair—in short, such a person as I have met with, from time to time, among the youths of the North; a soft, and, as it were, cau-

tious step; a pleasant utterance, with a very slight hesitation, and a demeanour something between reserved and bashful—very becoming in a young man. He read aloud small poems, especially his own, remarkably well, and wrote a flowing hand. To express the turn of his mind, I can find only the English word *whimsical*, which, as even the dictionary shows, comprises a vast variety of oddities in one composite idea. Perhaps, therefore, no one was more capable than he of feeling and imitating the wild flights and exuberant fancies of Shakspeare. The translation I have just mentioned is a proof of this. He handles his author with great freedom, is by no means faithful and close, but he knows so well how to fit on the armour, or rather the motley, of his original,—he mimics his antics and grimaces with so much humour,—that he must needs obtain the applause of all those who delight in such things.

"The absurdities of the clowns were our especial delight, and we thought Lenz a highly-favoured mortal, in having produced some verses in their style.

"The inclination towards the Absurd, which displays itself, free and unfettered, in early youth, and gradually subsides or retreats to the more inward depths of our minds, though it is never en-

tirely lost, was in its full vigour and luxuriance among us, and we sought to do honour to one great master by the production of original jests. We were quite triumphant whenever we could lay before the company any thing of this sort which met with approbation. When such things were submitted, we had sometimes very serious discussions whether they were worthy of the genuine clowns or not; whether they had flowed from the pure well-head of foolery, or whether they were adulterated with any undue portion of sense and reason.

"These strange fancies were the more actively diffused, and found the greater number of readers prepared for their reception, because Lessing (who was extremely looked up to) had given the first signal for them in his *Dramaturgie*."—(*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, book xi.)

The fourteenth book opens thus:

"Together with this extending movement of the public mind, was another; for the author, perhaps, of greater importance, since it prevailed among those by whom he was most immediately surrounded. Elder friends, who had seen in manuscript those poems which now excited so much attention, and thence regarded them as in some sort

their own, triumphed in the success which they, boldly enough, had predicted for them. To them were added new partisans, or participants, especially those who traced a productive power in themselves, or who wished to stimulate or to cherish it. Among the former, Lenz distinguished himself by especial and wonderful vivacity and zeal. The exterior of this remarkable man is already sketched, and his humorous talent affectionately remembered. Now I will try to speak of his character, rather from results than descriptively, since it were impossible to accompany him on all the wild excentricities of his career, or to give an idea of his peculiarities. We all know that kind of self-torment which was then in vogue, just because we were not suffering or dreading any evils from without, and which disquieted the highest sort of minds. That which gives ordinary men, who do not watch themselves, only a transient uneasiness which they endeavour to drive out of their minds, is, by the better sort, keenly observed, minutely studied, and recorded in letters, journals, and other writings. But now the most rigorous moral demands on oneself and others were associated with the greatest negligence in action; and an arrogant conceit, springing from this half self-knowledge, led to the strangest habits and manners.

" This wearing-out of the mind in self-observation found a sort of justification in the newly-awakened empirical psychology, which did not go the length of denouncing all that causes inward conflicts as bad and blameable, but yet could not quite approve it. And thus was an eternal and unappeaseable contest excited. To lead and to keep up this debate, Lenz now outdid all other unoccupied, or half-occupied people, who grope and pore into the inmost recesses of their minds; and thus he was, in all respects, a sufferer from that temper of the times, which should have been terminated by the portraiture of Werther. But an idiosyncracy of his mind distinguished him from all the others, who must be thoroughly recognized as frank, honest men. He had a decided propensity to intrigue—to intrigue, for its own sake—without having anything one could call an aim,—any intelligible, attainable, self-regarding object. He used rather constantly to propose to himself something grotesque; and for that very reason, it furnished him with continual amusement. In this way, he was, his whole life long, a rogue in imagination; his love, like his hate, was imaginary; he designedly and wilfully deceived and seduced with his descriptions and his feelings, in order that he might always have something to do.

He sought, by the most absurd and distorted means, to give reality to his inclinations and his aversions, and then always destroyed his own work himself; and thus he never did a service to one he loved, nor an injury to one he hated. He seemed only to sin for his own punishment; only to intrigue, in order to prop a new fable on an old one.

" His talent was the offspring of real depth of mind, and of exhaustless productivity. Tenderness, mobility, and subtilty contended for supremacy in it, but with all its beauty it was morbid: and such talents are just the hardest to appretiate. It was impossible not to perceive marks of real greatness in his works; a sweet tenderness insinuates itself through them amid the most silly and barroque monstrosities and fancies, which can hardly be forgiven, even for the sake of such thorough and unaffected humour, and so truly comic a vein. His days were made up of mere nothings, to which he, from his tendency to emotion, found means to give importance; and he was able to loiter away the more hours, because the time he spent in reading was fertilized by his excellent memory, and enriched his original imagination with varied materials.

" He was sent to Strasburg with two young Liefland nobles, and a mentor could hardly be more

unfortunately chosen. The elder Baron went back for a while to his own country, leaving a lady to whom he was wholly devoted. Lenz, in order to keep the younger brother (who also paid court to the lady), and other lovers, at a distance, and to preserve this treasure of a heart for his absent friend, now determined to affect to fall in love with her; or, it may be, to fall in love with her in reality. This scheme he followed out with the most obstinate adherence to the Ideal of it he had formed to himself; without choosing to perceive that he, like others, served only for the lady's jest and amusement.

"So much the better for him! For with him it was mere acting, and would last the longer, the longer she answered to it by acting, and now attracted, now repelled, now exalted, now humbled him. One may be assured, that whenever he was conscious of this (as was now and then the case), he congratulated himself on finding such a treasure with the utmost complacency.

"He and his pupils lived chiefly with the officers of the garrison, where he probably got the conception of those extraordinary scenes which he afterwards represented in his comedy of 'the Soldiers' (*Die Soldaten*). This early acquaintance with military men had one curious effect; he thought

himself very learned in the art of war. And indeed he had gradually studied it so in detail, that some years afterwards he actually addressed a long memoir to the French minister at war, from which he promised himself great things. The diseases of the system were pointed out with tolerable acuteness; the remedies were ludicrous and impracticable. He, however, was fully persuaded that it would give him great influence at court; and felt no gratitude to the friends who, partly by argument, partly by active opposition, tried to restrain him from sending this fantastic work (which was already neatly copied, packed in an envelope and formally addressed, with an accompanying letter), and who afterwards induced him to burn it.

" In conversation, and afterwards in writing, he had confided to me all the mazes of his strange eccentric conduct with regard to that young lady. The poetry that he found means to infuse into the most trivial things often astonished me, so that I earnestly entreated him to fructify the kernel of this long-winded adventure and to found a little novel upon it; but this did not suit him; he was never happy but when he could pour his whole mind boundlessly into the Individual, and spin an endless thread without aim or object. Perhaps it might at one time have been possible, with these

data, to make the course of his life, up to the time when he lost himself in madness, in some degree intelligible; at present, I must keep to that which is nearer to my purpose.

"Scarcely had Goetz of Berlichingen appeared, when Lenz sent me a long essay written upon small paper, such as he generally used, without the least margin, above, below, or at the side. It was entitled, 'On our Marriage,' and if I had it now, it would throw more light upon our subject than it did then to me; for I was still much in the dark concerning him and his character. The main purpose of this prolix essay was to place my talent and his in contra-position. Sometimes he appeared to rate himself below, sometimes on a level with me; but all this was done with such a humourous and graceful *tournure*, that I willingly adopted the views he wished to inspire me with;—the more, since I really estimated his endowments very highly, and only continually urged him to collect himself out of that formless vagrancy and dissipation of mind, and to employ the gifts of imagination which were bestowed upon him, with the self-possession requisite for art. I answered his confidence in the friendliest manner, and as he pressed for the most intimate union (as his strange title sufficiently indicated), I communicated every

thing to him, from this time forward; as well what I had already worked out, as what I projected. On the other hand he sent me his manuscripts, 'the Private Tutor,' 'the New Menoza,' 'the Soldiers,' 'Imitations of Plautus,' and that translation from the English, which I have mentioned as appendix to his remarks on the drama.

"In this it struck me as rather extraordinary that, in a laconic introduction, he expressed himself as if the contents of this essay, which was a violent attack on the regular drama, had been read some years previously in the form of a lecture before a society of lovers of literature; at a time, too, when Goetz had not appeared. Among Lenz's Strasburg connexions, a circle of which I knew nothing, seemed somewhat problematical; but I let it go, and procured him a publisher for this, as well as for his other works, without taking the slightest notice that he had selected me as the special object of his imaginary hatred, and of a fantastic and capricious persecution."—(*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, book xiv.)

Note 27.

I give this extraordinary song, as a specimen of Goethe's power over the tones of language. Because it is so, I cannot attempt a translation of it. Where so much depends on the sound of words translation can rarely answer. In Mr. William Taylor's version of Bürger's *Lenore*, it does perfectly; but that is a most rare instance, and, so far as I know, unrivalled.

Zigeunerlied.

Im Nebelgeriesel, im tiefen Schnee,
Im wilden Wald, in der Winternacht,
Ich hörte der Wölfe Hungergeheul,
Ich hörte der Eulen Geschrei:
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Ich schoss einmal eine Katz'am Zaun,
Der Anne, der Hex', ihre schwarze liebe Katz';
Da kamen des Nachts sieben Wehrwölf' zu mir,
Waren sieben sieben Weiber vom Dorf.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Ich kannte sie all', ich kannte sie wohl
Die Anne, die Ursel, die Käth',
Die Liese, die Barbe, die Ev', die Beth;
Sie heulten im Kreise mich an.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Da nannt' ich sie alle bei Namen laut:
Was willst du, Anne? was willst du, Beth?
Da rüttelten sie sich, da schüttelten sie sich
Und liefen und heulten daron.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Note 28.

These beautiful lines, which have all the calm and harmony of a summer night, afford a singular contrast to the poem in the last Note. Their sweetness is, perhaps, as unattainable as the wild dis-

sonance of the other; but I venture this attempt at their meaning—and something like the measure.

Every tree-top is at peace——
E'en the rustling woods do cease
Every sound:
The small birds sleep on every bough;
Wait but a moment—soon wilt thou
Sleep in peace!

The last line of the original rimes with the two first.

Note 29.

Friedrich Maximilian von Klinger, born at Frankfurt on the Maine, 1753. He is of the number of those, by whose powerful and extraordinary productions that movement in our literature was wrought fifty years ago, which has been called, after the title of one of his plays (*Sturm-und-Drang*), the storm-and-passion period. He, too,

was excited by the genius of Shakspeare, and his youthful strength delighted to try itself in the regions of the Unwonted. As it was real strength that elevated and impelled him, he could safely venture on the Untried; and his daring was most successful. No German writer had, as yet, so roused all passions, as he did by his 'Twins' (*Die Zwillingen*). The great admiration bestowed upon him deserved that he should not long suffer himself to be misled into wild and devious paths. Practice, and intercourse with the world, he himself tells us, reclaimed him from exaggeration and violence. "Civil and domestic life must teach every man that simplicity, order, and truth are the enchanter's wands with which we must touch the heart, if we would have it return a sound." How much does this admission make us regret that we do not know more of his life!

Klinger received his first education at the gymnasium at Frankfurt; after which, he studied at the university of Giessen. His inclination was for a military life; and on the breaking out of the Bavarian war of succession, he entered the Austrian service. In 1780 he went from Weimar to Petersburg, where he received a commission in the Marines from the High Admiral, Grand-Prince Paul, and was also appointed his reader. In his

suite he travelled over great part of Europe. In the early part of Paul's reign, he rose to the rank of major-general. On this slippery and perilous course, amid the most critical circumstances, at a time when manly firmness and courage were full of danger, he stood fast in the maintenance of high moral strength, and secured the unshaken confidence of all around him. In the second year of Alexander's reign, he received the order of St. Anne of the first class, and the rent of a crown estate in Courland for life. Other honours followed. In 1811 he was made lieutenant-general. After forty years of active service, he resigned all his posts and retired upon a pension, retaining only his voice in the council and the superintendance of two institutions founded by the Empress Maria. At the close of life, he expressed his obligations to his two early friends, Goethe and Georg Schlosser, for the advice he had often received from them. Amidst all this activity in public life, Klinger had gained views on poetry which our æsthetikers did not dream of. A high moral tone, a spirit busied with great and noble thoughts, a vigorous, manly intellect and character, simple habits, enjoyment in a moderate way of living, perfect ignorance of the passion for happiness-hunting—who had ever thought of requiring these qualities

in a poet? How such a theory arose in his mind; how first the actual world presented itself to his mind's eye only through a poetic veil; then how the poetic world was shaken to its foundations by the actual one, and how at last it gained the victory, because the self-sustained moral sense diffused light through the darkness which threatened to enshroud the poet's mind, the attentive reader will readily find many a trace of in the poet's delightful 'Observations and Thoughts on various subjects connected with the World and with Literature,' (*Betrachtungen und Gedanken über verschiedene Gegenstände der Welt und Literatur.*) With such views he projected a series of novels: 'Faust's life, deeds, and flight to hell;' 'The History of Giafer the Barmecide;' 'The History of Raphael Aquinas;' 'Travels before the Flood;' 'The Faust of the Orientals;' 'History of a German of modern times;' 'The Man of the world and the Poet,' (in every point of view his most perfect work); 'Sahir;' 'Eve's First-born in Paradise.' These works embrace all the natural and artificial relations of life, the whole moral being of man; and touch upon society, religion, high ideal conceptions, the sweet dreams of another world, the gleaming hope of a purer state of being, even on this earth. The tone of the tales is, of

course, different; and as different is the impression they leave on the mind of the reader. The heart, torn by 'Faust,' is strengthened and elevated by 'Giafer' and 'Raphael.' If cold reason seeks to wither the blossoms of life, in the Faust of the East they are quickened anew by the heart. If the 'Man of the world and the Poet,' and the 'History of a German' awaken a gentle melancholy, it is as gently chased by the 'Sahir.' In the collection of his works, he has bequeathed to posterity the purest of his feelings, the noblest of his wishes, the best of his thoughts, in all the completeness he could give them. They were published in 12 volumes, by Nicolovius (Königsberg, 1809-10)."—(*Abridged from the Conv.-Lex.*)

Almost immediately after the description of Lenz, in the *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, follows this of Klinger.

"If the orator or the writer, conscious of the powerful effect of contrasts, is glad to employ them, even though he have to seek them out, and bring them together from afar, it must be the more agreeable to an author when so striking a one presents itself to him as the description of Klinger, after that of Lenz, will afford. They were cotemporaries, and their youthful efforts were made in

concert. Lenz, however, like a transient meteor, passed for a moment athwart the horizon of German literature, and then vanished, without leaving a trace behind. Klinger, on the other hand, maintains his station as an influential writer, as an active and able man of business, up to this hour. I will now, without further comparison, which will manifest itself, speak of him, in so far as it is necessary,—since the variety and quantity he has produced are not hidden, but both hold their place in the memory and the estimation of his friends and of the public.

" Klinger's exterior—for with that I always prefer to begin—was very advantageous. Nature had given him a tall, slender, well-turned person, and regular features; he was attentive to his appearance, dressed neatly, and might claim to be considered the best-looking member of our little society. His demeanour was neither conciliatory nor repulsive, and, even amid the most violent internal storm, calm and moderate.

" In a girl, we love what she is;—in a young man, what he promises to be; and thus was I Klinger's friend, as soon as I became acquainted with him. He made a favourable impression by his genuine amiableness, and a decision of character which it was impossible to mistake, won him

confidence. He was remarked, from his youth up, for a grave, earnest manner; he and a sister, as handsome and as estimable as himself, had the charge of a widowed mother, who needed such children to support her. All that was in him he had procured and created for himself; so that one could not be displeased at the traces of haughty independence which ran through all his demeanour. Various original projects, such as are common to all well-endowed men—facility of comprehension,—an admirable memory and enunciation—these he possessed in a high degree: but all these he seemed to value far less than the firmness and perseverance which were not only innate in him, but thoroughly confirmed by circumstances.

"On such a young man, Rousseau's works must needs make a peculiar impression. *Emile* was his grand elementary book; and the thoughts in it, which exercised an influence over the whole civilized world, struck root and fructified in him in particular. For he, too, was a child of nature;—he, too, had made his way upwards, from the humblest beginnings; what others ought to get rid of, he had never possessed—connections; these, from which others emancipate themselves as they can, never cramped and fettered him: and thus he might be regarded as the most genuine disciple

of that gospel of nature; and in virtue of his strenuous efforts, and of his conduct as man and as son, might very fairly exclaim, 'All is good as it comes out of the hands of Nature!' But unfortunately the sequel—'All degenerates under the hands of man'—was forced upon him by painful experience. He had to struggle not with himself, but with the work of common-place and of prejudice around him, from which the citizen of Geneva sought to deliver us.

"But as, in the position of a young man, this conflict is often difficult and keen, he felt himself too violently driven back upon himself, ever to attain to a gay and joyous turn of mind. He had to take every thing by storm and vehement pressure; and hence a vein of bitterness insinuated itself into his mind and manners. And this he sometimes cherished and encouraged in after life, but more frequently fought against and conquered.

"His productions, in so far as they are present to my mind, are marked by a vigorous, severe intellect; a thoroughly sincere, honest intention; a lively imagination; a happy turn for the observation of the varieties of human nature, and a characteristic delineation of the generical differences. His girls and boys are free, natural, and lovely; his youths ardent; his men straight-forward and intel-

ligent* ; the unfavourable characters not overdrawn ; there is no want of cheerfulness and good humour, wit and happy thoughts ; he has allegories and symbols at command ; he can amuse and please us, and our enjoyment would be yet purer if he did not here and there darken a gay jest by a tinge of bitter misanthropy. But this makes him just what he is ; and hence is it that the varieties of the Living and the Writing are so numerous ; that each floats hither and thither, theoretically, between conviction and error,—practically, between quickening and destroying.

" Klinger belongs to the class of persons who form themselves for the world out of their own temper and understanding. And since this class (now much more numerous than formerly) used a language common to themselves,—which was powerful and effective inasmuch as it was borrowed from universal nature and from national peculiarities,—they conceived and cherished an intense disgust for school forms, especially when, severed from their living source, they degenerated into

* *Verständig* is the word—and is not *intelligent,* but what is, in common parlance, called *sensible.* I cannot prevail on myself to employ it in such a sense, whatever be the authority. We are without an adjective expressing *having a good understanding.—Transl.*

phrases, and thus totally lost their first fresh significancy.

"And as such men declare themselves against new opinions, views, or systems, so do they also against new events, against remarkable and pre-eminent men, who announce, or effect, great changes; a line of conduct that ought no wise to displease us in them, since they see that to which they owe their whole existence and education menaced.

"This pertinacity of a sturdy character, however, acquires dignity when it sustains itself through the intercourse and business of life; and when a manner of treating what occurs, which to many might appear abrupt, nay, violent, applied at the right time, leads most certainly to its end.

"This was the case with him; for, without any pliancy (which, indeed, was never the virtue of a true-born *Reichsbürger**), but so much the more vigorously, firmly, and honourably, he raised himself to important posts; maintained himself in them, and received the approbation and favour of his highest patrons; while he never forgot either his old friends, or the road which lay behind him. indeed, he perseveringly endeavoured to preserve

* Native of a free imperial city.—*Transl.*

an unshaken constancy of remembrance, through all stages and degrees of absence and of separation. It deserves to be noticed, that he, like another Willigis, did not scorn to perpetuate allusions to his early days in his armorial bearings, graced as they were with the decorations of numerous orders."—*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, book ii.

I have willingly seized upon this occasion of giving a few imperfect glimpses of the contents of the *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Of the scandalous dishonesty of the translation of that work I have spoken elsewhere; and it was sufficiently exposed in the Westminster Review. The evil genius of England, however, was not satisfied with this display of unprincipled disloyalty and ignorant presumption, directed against an illustrious poet. The article which appeared in the Edinburgh Review, on the same work, was fully a match, intellectually and morally, for the translation. It contains not one single extract, from which the reader might judge of the style or nature of the contents—not even a remark of the author on any subject on which the opinion of such a man must excite the curiosity, if it does not command the admiration, of every cultivated mind.

Such attacks, it is true, have had, and will have, not the slightest effect on Goethe's fame; but they have had the effect of discrediting English criticism, and of indurating the arrogant prejudices of the half-educated and one-sided among English readers.

Note 30.

Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim, born in 1719, in the principality of Halberstadt. His father died when he was sixteen, and the young and destitute Gleim was educated at the charge of some benevolent families. He went to the high-school at Halle, and pursued his studies in the midst of poverty, with ardour and cheerfulness. The celebrated jurist Heineccius, Baumgarten, and Wolf, were among his instructors. In 1740, he went, as private tutor, into the family of a Colonel Schulz, at Potsdam, where Prince Wilhelm, son of the Markgraf of Brandenburg-Schwedt, became acquainted with him, and made him his private

secretary. Here he formed that intimacy with Ewald Christian von Kleist, which continued through life.

The second Silesian war, in 1744, separated Gleim from his literary friends, and robbed him of his kind patron, who fell before Prague. After some time, he was appointed secretary to the Chapter at Halberstadt, where he lived very agreeably. He corresponded with all the literary of Germany, Lessing, Gessner, Wieland, *&c.* In 1749 he published his collection of Songs. He became acquainted with Klopstock, Gellert, Rabener, *&c.* and used to assemble them about him at Halberstadt, where they enjoyed life and poetry together. He was intimate with them all—for friendship was the element of his life. He had the rare and fortunate talent of discovering what was excellent in every one, and of rejoicing in it as a personal advantage. The most different characters were brought into contact and harmony by the force and vivacity of his friendship ;—each turned to him in every event of life, good or evil, certain of the most active help, the most cordial sympathy. He was never married. His clever niece, Dorothea, so often celebrated under the name of Gleminde, kept his house. The war-songs which he published during the seven years' war,

in the character of a Prussian grenadier, raised his fame to its highest pitch. They remain to this day unequalled for tone, elevation, vigour, and animation, and have obtained for their author a high place among the poets of Germany. Poetry was rather an enjoyment than a business to him. Whether an attempt succeeded or not, it had furnished *him* with agreeable occupation. He drew and planted around him a circle of young literary friends, and his zeal for their social welfare, as well as for their literary fame, knew no bounds. He conceived the project of founding an academy at Halberstadt, which, in his will, he called 'A School of Humanity,' but which was too vague to be practicable. He had the rare talent of mixing with all classes and sorts of men, on the most kindly footing. His 'Songs for the People' show this. He was a philanthropist, in the truest and noblest sense of the word. His patriotism was pure and ardent. The French revolution filled him with dismay. His prophetic spirit saw the storm about to burst over his beloved fatherland. His exhortations to Germans to unite, and to struggle till death for the independence of Germany, were unceasing. He devoted his talents to the endeavour to inspire the people with sound notions on liberty and equality—on the duties of

sovereign and subject. His voice was lost in the universal uproar of political elements. He therefore sought repose from the gloomy and threatening Present in retirement. Two years before his death he became totally blind. In the 84th year of his age he took leave of his friends, and died, tranquil and resigned. His person is faithfully delineated in Klopstock's Ode—the image of his mind, the language of his heart, live in the smallest of his sayings or poems. Hagedorn and he gave us the light *naif* song;—he, before Hagedorn and others, the true child's fable, the playful romance, the Tyrtean war-song. As a father of youth, as a friend of man, his memory lives in the hearts of all the good and the noble:—they have given him the fairest of all titles—'Father Gleim.' —(*Abridged from the Conversations-Lexicon.*)

A notice of Gleim, and some translations, are to be found in the first volume of Taylor's Survey. Among the latter is a master-piece of translation, beginning 'We met—a hundred of us met.—' To the beautiful and affecting portrait above, I add the following passage from the *Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*. I trust this and other extracts will be a sufficient answer to the charge brought against Goethe, that he liked to depreciate other men of letters.

A. D. 1805.—" Our visit to Halberstadt was very tranquil and satisfactory. The noble-hearted Gleim had rejoined the friends of his youth some years before. A visit which I had paid him long ago had left only a dim impression; and the busy, varied life I had since led, had nearly effaced from my remembrance the peculiarities of his person and manners. Nor could I, either then or subsequently, form any connection with him; but his activity was never unknown to me; I heard much of him from Wieland and Herder, with whom he kept up a correspondence.

" We were very kindly received in his house, by Herr Körte. It spoke of neatness and competency—a peaceful life, and quiet social comfort. We honoured his memory in his posterity, and heard and talked much about him.

" Gleim's poetry was akin to the whole spirit of German life and manners. The character displayed by the poet is more peculiarly that of a man loving and worthy to be loved. His poetry, looked at on the technical side, is rhythmical, not melodious; for which reason he generally employed the freer metres. Verse and rime, letters and essays, intermingled, produce the impression of an agreeable sort of mind, occupied within judiciously-chosen limits.

" We were particularly charmed with his Temple of Friendship, containing a collection of portraits of older and more recent date. They showed how he valued his cotemporaries, and agreeably recalled to us many distinguished countenances—their indwelling spirits—their relation to one another, and to the excellent man who generally collected them for a time around him, and took care to keep the departing and the absent with him—at least in effigy. This was a sight to suggest many a reflection; I shall mention but one—there were above a hundred poets and *littérateurs*, but not one single musician or composer. How was this? Could the excellent old man, who, according to his own representations, seemed to live and breathe only in singing, have not even a guess of the real nature of song—of music?—the true element whence all poetry springs, and into which it all returns.

" If we tried to collect together all our floating notions of the noble-hearted man into one conception, it would amount to this. The ground-work of his character was a passionate benevolence, which he endeavoured to render active, in word and in deed; encouraging every one, by conversation and by writing; labouring to diffuse an universal and pure feeling of humanity; he was the friend of all;

beneficent to the wretched, but more peculiarly the resource of indigent youth. Frugal in his household, beneficence seems to have been the only taste on which he expended what was not necessary to himself. Most of what he did was from his own resources; more rarely, and not till the later years of his life, he employed his name and reputation to acquire some influence with kings and ministers. But he gained little by this; they treated him with respect, tolerated and commended his activity, assisted him a little, but generally hesitated to enter vigorously into his views.

"Altogether, we must admit that he had the sense of the duties of a citizen, in the highest and most singular degree. As man, he rested wholly on himself; he held an important public post; proved himself, towards city, province, and kingdom, a patriot, and, towards the German fatherland and the world, a true, genuine 'Liberal.' On the other hand, all the revolutionary projects and proceedings which occurred in his later years, were utterly hateful to him, as had formerly been all that was hostile to Prussia and to her great monarch.

"And further—as every religion ought to promote the pure and peaceful intercourse of man with man, and as the Christian evangelical reli-

gion is peculiarly adapted to that end, he, who constantly practised that religion of the Upright which was an integral and necessary part of his nature, might well and truly consider himself as the most orthodox of men, and might rest tranquilly in the hereditary profession, and the established simple rites, of the Protestant church.

" After all these lively reminiscences, we went to see another image of the departed—we visited the sick bed of Gleim's dying niece, who, under the name of Gleminde, had been for many years the ornament of a poetical circle. Her sweet, though sickly countenance, was in delicate harmony with the exquisite neatness of all around her; and we had an interesting conversation on those delightful by-gone days, and on the works and ways of her excellent uncle, which were ever present to her.

" Lastly, to conclude our pilgrimage solemnly and worthily, we went into the garden, to the grave of this honest and noble old man, to whom it was granted, after so many years of sorrow and suffering, of activity and patience, to rest in the spot he loved, surrounded by memorials of departed friends."

Note 31.

I do not attempt any translation of this song, which has a sweet simplicity that reminds me of some of Burns's songs:

Schäfers Klagelied.

Da droben auf jenem Berge
Da steh' ich tausendmal
An meinem Stabe gebogen
Und schaue hinab in das Thal.

Dann folg' ich der weidenden Herde,
Mein Hündchen bewahret mir sie.
Ich bin herunter gekommen
Und weiss doch selber nicht wie.

Da stehet von schönen Blumen
Die ganze Wiese so voll.
Ich breche sie, ohne zu wissen,
Wem ich sie geben soll.

Und Regen, Sturm und Gewitter
Verpass' ich unter dem Baum.
Die Thüre dort bleibet verschlossen;
Doch alles ist leider ein Traum.

Es stehet ein Regenbogen
Wohl über jenem Haus!
Sie aber ist weggezogen,
Und weit in das Land hinaus.

Hinaus in das Land und weiter,
Vielleicht gar über die See.
Vorüber, ihr Schafe, vorüber!
Dem Schäfer ist gar zu weh.

Note 32.

When I gave a literal translation of these lines (p. 92, vol. i.) I did not recollect in which of Schiller's plays they occurred. I should hardly have been guilty of the absurdity of translating what has been translated by Mr. Coleridge.

This is his version:

"Self-contradiction is the only wrong;
For by the laws of spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict consistence with itself."

Wallenstein, Act iv. Scene 7.

The other passage (quoted at p. 92, vol. i.) he renders thus—

> " And with success comes pardon hand in hand,
> For all event is God's arbitrement."

It is from an earlier part of the same scene, between Wallenstein and Countess Tertsky.

Note 33.

I do not find Merk in the *Conversations-Lexicon*, from which I infer that there is little to tell about him (in addition to what is related in the text) but what we gather from Goethe's description in the *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. He calls him " Mephistophiles Merk," and it seems probable that Merk's bitter, scornful misanthropy might furnish many hints for that consummate portrait of a " sneering devil."

Goethe says, " his presence never brought a blessing any where." The inward discontent, which ended in self-destruction, was of a very dif-

ferent character in him, and in the unhappy but noble Kleist.

I have extracted these fragments, detached as they are, because they are all I can find relating to one of Goethe's earliest friends.

"I was soon introduced to Merk, to whom I had been not unfavourably announced from Strasburg, by Herder. This singular man, who had the greatest influence on my life, was born at Darmstadt. Of his early education I can say little. After he had completed his studies he accompanied a young man, as tutor, to Switzerland, where he remained for some time, and came back with a wife. When I became acquainted with him he was paymaster to the forces in Darmstadt."

"Born with understanding and talent, he had acquired a great deal of liberal knowledge, particularly of modern literature, and had looked at the history of the world and of mankind under all aspects and in all countries. He was endowed with a keen and accurate judgment. He was esteemed an excellent, decided man of business, and ready accountant. He found easy access every where, as he was a most agreeable companion to those to whom he did not make himself formidable by biting sarcasms. His person was tall and gaunt; he had a long projecting pointed nose, light blue, or rather

gray eyes, which moved to and fro with a keen watchfulness, and gave his face a tiger-like expression. Lavater has preserved his profile."

"In his character lay a wonderful incongruity: by nature a frank, honourable, and trustworthy man, he had become embittered against the world, and had suffered this morbid caprice to gain such power over him, that he felt an unconquerable inclination to be designedly, and of malice aforethought, a rogue, — nay, a rascal. Reasonable, calm, kind at one moment, in the next he might be seized with a sudden impulse to do something which would vehemently offend or even injure another. But as people delight to play round a danger from which they fancy themselves secure, I had all the greater inclination to live with him, and to enjoy his good qualities. I had a confident sort of presentiment that he would not turn his bad side to me. But as, on the one hand, he spoiled society for himself by this restless spirit, by this uncontrolable propensity to treat men with scorn and spite, on the other, a different sort of disquiet, which he also most assiduously nourished in himself, was at variance with his inward complacency. He felt a certain dilettanteish passion for writing, which was the more violent from the ease and felicity with which he expressed him-

self in prose and in verse, and from his undoubted claims to play a part among the *beaux esprits* of the time. I still possess poetic epistles of his of uncommon boldness, force, and Swift-like bitterness—singularly marked by their original views of persons and things, but written with such a power of giving pain and offence, that I should not, even now, venture to publish them, but must either destroy them, or leave them to posterity as a striking document of the secret split in our literature."

"It was, however, a source of suffering to himself that all his labours were undertaken in a spirit of contradiction and destruction. And he often expressed his envy of me for my innocent pleasure in creation and description*, which sprang from

* *Darstellung* (before-placing). This is one of the words which continually occur, to the grief and perplexity of the translator. I have here used two words to express it, but, in truth, neither does—nor have I ever been able to satisfy myself with a rendering of it. Our Latin-English *preposition* (or perhaps *opposition*) is perfectly analogous in structure, but is otherwise disposed of. *Representation* does in some cases, as for instance when it relates to the drama. But it is one proof among many of the total absence of æsthetical science among us, that we can dispense with a generic word expressing the *putting-before* the senses or the imagination, objects with which they are cognizant. In the title

delight in the original and in the copy.* In other respects his literary dilettantism would have been rather advantageous than injurious to him, had he not also had an uncontrolable propensity to engage in technical and mercantile affairs. For one moment he would execrate his talents for business, and be almost distracted at his inability to satisfy the claims of a flexible talent with sufficient geniality, and the next would let poetry and all the other arts go to the winds, and ponder over manufacturing or commercial speculations which brought him in money, while they furnished him with amusement."—(*Dichtung und Wahrheit,* book xi.)

of my text-work I have used *pourtrayed* for *dargestellt,* but that, or *delineated,* besides being foreign words, are metaphorical and borrowed from *one* art.—*Transl.*

* *Freude an dem Vorbild und dem Nachgebildeten. Vorbild* may here have one of two different senses, or it may include both. I will not take upon me to say which is the intention of the author. It may mean the *Idea* or *Type* in the mind of the artist, of which the *Nachgebildete* is the outward expression;—or it may mean the external *Object,* which is *dargestellt*—represented or pourtrayed. In the one case the production of the *Nachgebildeten* is what we should call *creation*; in the other, *description.* The original includes both, and is therefore the more completely and accurately adapted to Goethe.—*Transl.*

"I hoped that Merk would prolong his stay at Giessen; but he was not to be moved, and was driven away by his hatred of the university. For as there are innate antipathies, and one man cannot bear a cat, and another's whole soul recoils from some other thing, Merk had a mortal enmity to all members of a university; and, to say truth, those of Giessen were at this time fallen into incredible rudeness. I liked them extremely. I could very well have used them as masks in one of my carnival pieces; but the sight of them by day, and the uproar by night, destroyed every particle of good humour in him. He had passed the best of his young days in French Switzerland, and had afterwards enjoyed a very agreeable intercourse with courtiers, men of the world, of business, and of letters; several military men, in whom a desire for instruction was stirred up, sought his acquaintance; and thus he had passed his life among very accomplished and well-bred people."

"That these bad manners displeased him, therefore, was not wonderful; but his aversion to the students was really more violent than beseemed a reasonable man, though he used often to make me laugh by his witty descriptions of their monstrous appearance and behaviour."—(Book xii.)

"But even in this pleasant company," (at the

house of Frau von Laroche, of Coblentz,) " the matter of incompatibility, the disagreeable effects of which generally break out in educated as well as uneducated society, grew and flourished in secret. Merk, at once cold and restless, had not long listened to the letters which were read, when he began to let fall his sarcastic remarks on persons and things." * * *

sketches were drawn by a well-known hand."—Book xiii.

"But here (concerning 'Clavigo') Mephistophiles Merk did me, for the first time, a great injury; for when I communicated the play to him, he replied—'You must not write any more such rubbish,—others can do that.' And yet he was wrong.'" * * * * * * * Book xv.

Note 34.

Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, born at Düsseldorf, in 1743. His father destined him to trade. He went to school at Frankfurt, where his deep feeling of religion manifested itself even at that early age, and often rendered him an object of ridicule to his companions. From Frankfurt, he went to Geneva, where he remained three years. During this time his mind had made such progress, that he returned home with heavy heart, to enter on the management of his father's business. He carried this on for several years, without, however,

neglecting literature. He became acquainted with many of the most distinguished persons of his time. His brother, Johann Georg, the poet, introduced him to Wieland; but Goethe produced a still stronger effect upon his mind. He married a wife richly endowed in body and mind, and inheriting a fortune which rendered him independent. In 1779 he was invited to Munich, and appointed privy councillor; but soon fell into disfavour, on account of the frankness with which he commented on the Bavarian custom-house system. He lived in the bosom of his amiable family, at his beautiful residence at Pempelsfort, happy in his intercourse with the greatest spirits of the age. A severe illness, and the death of his beloved wife, interrupted this felicity. He devoted himself with the more ardour to science; a journey to Weimar, where he saw Goethe, and formed a friendship with Herder, tended to recruit his spirits. His earlier works, 'Allwill' and 'Woldemar,' were a sort of philosophical novels. In 1785, he published his 'Letters on Spinoza,' (*Briefe über Spinoza,*) and from that time devoted himself chiefly to metaphysical and religious speculations. The French revolution drove him from Düsseldorf to Holstein. In 1804, he was invited to the newly-formed academy of sciences at Munich, of which

he was afterwards appointed president. On attaining his seventieth year, he relinquished this post, the salary of which was continued to him till his death. He died in 1819. Jacobi's inward life is rich in all that can attract the wise and the good. His lofty mind strove to unite poetry with philosophy. His earlier works exhibit him as a philosophical poet; his later, the 'Letters on Spinoza's Doctrines,' 'David Hume on Belief, or Idealism and Realism,' and his 'Letter to Fichte,' as a philosopher.

As a poet, he is distinguished for vigorous painting, admirable delineation of nature and the human heart, warmth and depth of feeling, and a lively, bold, yet correct turn of expression. As a philosopher, he is admired for his rare depth of thought, for the fervour of his religious feelings, and the originality and beauty of his style. At the same time, there are few authors concerning whom opinions vary more, than concerning Jacobi. It seems as if his poetry injured him with the philosophers, and his philosophy with the poets.

Jacobi's polemical merits were great. He pointed out the chasms, the unconnectedness, and the mischievous results of the prevalent opinions, with critical acuteness, and with all the eloquence of a just aversion. With his peculiar modes of

thinking, it was natural that he should not become the disciple of any other philosopher, and that he should come into conflict, alternately, with the dogmatic Mendelssohn, the critical Kant, the idealistical Fichte, and the pantheistical Schelling; against the latter of whom, indeed, he expressed himself with too much bitterness. Jacobi's place among the pure searchers after truth, must, however, remain for ever uncontested. Hegel has given a character of him in the *Heidelberger Jahrbuch*, 1817.—(*Abridged from the Conversations-Lexicon.*)

Goethe thus describes his first meeting with the two brothers Jacobi. He was travelling down the Rhine, with Basedow and Lavater.

"Even at Ems, I had been delighted at the prospect of meeting the brothers Jacobi at Kölln."

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"The frankness of their younger sisters, the great cheerfulness of Fritz Jacobi's wife, attracted us more and more towards them. They had formed a very intimate friendship with my sister during their visits to Frankfurt." * * * * * *

"Our first meeting at Kölln was, therefore, frank and cordial. I was no longer treated as the mere misty tail of these two great wandering stars. I

was weary of my flights and follies, under which, indeed, I did but hide the craving void of my heart and mind."

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"What we have thought, the images we have seen, we recall to our understanding and to our imagination; but the heart is not so tractable; it will not repeat to us its beautiful feelings; least of all have we the power of making present to us past moments of enthusiasm; unpremeditatedly we fall into them, and we give ourselves up to them unconsciously. Others who observe us in such moments, have, therefore, a more clear and distinct perception of them than we."

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"Although poetical delineation busied me the most, and was most in harmony with my nature, yet reflexion on topics of every kind was not strange to me; and Jacobi's original, and I may say constitutional, tendency to subjects beyond the reach of human inquiry, was highly welcome and interesting to me. Here was no disagreement; neither theological, as with Lavater, nor didactical, as with Basedow. The thoughts that Jacobi communicated to me sprang immediately from his feelings; and how singularly and deeply was I affected when he revealed to me, with boundless confidence, the

deepest wants and aspirations of his soul! Out of so wonderful a combination of want, passion, and ideas, I could derive only a presentiment of what was, perhaps, hereafter to become more clear to me. Happily, my mind had been worked, if not formed, on this side. I had received into it the character and opinions of an extraordinary man—imperfectly, it is true, and, as it were, by snatches,—but still I found the effects considerable. The mind that wrought so powerfully on mine, and had so great an influence on the whole frame of my opinions, was Spinoza's. After I had looked around the world in vain, for means of shaping my strange moral being, I fell at length on the Ethics of this man. What I read in this work,—what I thought I read in it,—I can give no account of; enough, that I found there a calm to my passions; it seemed to open to me a wide and free view over the sensual* and the moral world. But what peculiarly rivetted me, was the boundless disinterestedness that beamed forth from every sentence. Those wondrous words, 'He who loves God aright must not require that God should love him in return,' with

* I have the authority of Mr. Coleridge for this use of the word, which, without it, indisputably correct as it is, I should have hardly dared to adopt.—*Transl.*

all the premises on which they rest, with all the consequences with which they teem, filled my whole mind. To be disinterested in all—most of all, in love and in friendship—was my highest desire, my maxim, my task; so that those daring words which follow, 'If I love you, what is that to you?' were the true language of my heart. But here, too, we may see that the most intimate unions rest on contrast. The all-equalizing serenity of Spinoza, contrasted with my all-agitating vehemence; his mathematical precision, with my poetical way of feeling and of representing; and even that systematic method of his which was generally regarded as ill adapted to moral questions, rendered me his most passionate disciple, his most determined admirer.

"And now all was in the first working and counter-working—boiling and fermenting. Fritz Jacobi, the first whom I allowed to look down into this chaos, whose mind was likewise travailing in the Profound, accepted my confidence with cordiality, answered me with the like, and tried to lead me into his own way of thinking. He, too, experienced an inexpressible spiritual want; he, too, would not have it appeased by foreign help, but would form and enlighten himself out of himself. What he imparted to me, of the state of his

mind, I could not comprehend; the less, as I could form no adequate conception of that of my own. But he, who was far in advance of me in philosophical thinking, and even in acquaintance with Spinoza, tried to guide and to enlighten my dark efforts. So pure and genuine an alliance of mind was new to me, and excited a passionate longing for further intercommunication. At night, after we had parted and had retired to our bed-rooms, I often sought him again. The moonlight trembled on the broad Rhine, while we stood at the window, revelling in the fullness of this giving and receiving, which, at that glorious unfolding-time of youth, springs up with such luxuriance."

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"When I returned to my friend Jacobi, I enjoyed the enrapturing feeling of an union cemented by inmost temper and character. We were both animated by the liveliest hope of common activity and common usefulness, and I urgently exhorted him to image forth all that lived and moved within him, in some powerful form. This was the means by which I had forcibly extricated myself from so many labyrinths. I hoped it might answer with him. He did not delay seizing upon it with courage; and how much that was good, lovely, heart-gladdening, did he not produce! And thus we

parted, in the blessed feeling of an eternal union,—utterly without a presentiment that our labours would take contrary directions, as became but too evident in the course of our lives."—*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, book xiv.

What this great divergence of opinion was, will be in some degree explained in what follows.

"Jacobi 'On divine Things,' (*Von den göttlingen Dingen*), was painful to me. How could the book of so dearly-loved a friend be welcome, wherein I found this thesis pervading the whole—that Nature concealed God. Could it be otherwise than that, with my manner of viewing things (both innately and by exercise, genuine and deep), which had taught me to see God in Nature, and Nature in God, indissolubly, so that this mode of conception was become the basis of my whole existence;—could it be otherwise than that the expression of so strange, one-sided, and narrow an opinion, must for ever sever me, intellectually, from this most noble man, whose heart I loved and reverenced? But I did not brood over my painful vexation; on the contrary, I took refuge in my old asylum, and found in Spinoza's Ethics my daily amusement for many weeks; and as, meanwhile, my own mind had advanced, many things

appeared to me new and different, even in what I was familiar with before, and had a fresh and peculiar effect upon me."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, A. D. 1811.

This effect is shown in the following lines, the translation of which is extremely unsatisfactory to me:

" Was wär' ein Gott der nur von aussen stiesse
Im Kreis das All am Finger laufen liesse?
Ihm ziemt's die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,
Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen,
So dass was in Ihm lebt, und webt, und ist,
Nie Seine Kraft, nie Seinen Geist vermisst!

TRANSLATION.

What were a God that impelled but from without?
That caused the All to revolve mechanically?
Him it beseems to move the world from within,
To foster Nature in Himself, Himself in Nature;
So that what in Him lives, and moves, and has its being,
May never be without his Power, never without his Spirit.

Note 35.

Herder is perhaps sufficiently known in England to render any biographical notice of him here unnecessary: Mr. Taylor's "Survey" contains one. Mr. Taylor's estimate of Herder is not, I confess, at all satisfactory to me; but the leading incidents of his life are recorded. A translation of his great work, the *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, was published many years ago. I never saw it, but I am told it is a very poor one, probably filtered through the French, as so many of our professed translations from the German of that day were. I am told that there is a very good memoir of Herder in the Monthly Repository for November and December, 1830, signed J. J. T., and that the same journal contains an able analysis of the *Ideen, &c.* in the numbers from January to April, 1832, inclusive. I regret that they have not fallen in my way.

There is also an excellent article on this eloquent writer in the London Magazine for April, 1823, from the pen, I believe, of Mr. de Quincey. I should be glad to insert it all, but both the public and the author might complain of this. I venture to hope for the forgiveness of both, if not the thanks of the former, for the insertion of the beautiful

translation of Jean Paul's character of Herder. It must, however, be understood that Jean Paul was universally regarded as a partial witness to Herder's merits.

"The passages in which John Paul speaks of Herder are many: two in particular I remember of great beauty, one in the *Flegel-jahre,* the other in his last work, *Der Comet* (1821); but, not having those works at hand, I shall translate that which is cited by the editor of Mrs. Herder's Memoirs, omitting only such parts as would be unintelligible without explanations of disproportionate length.

"'Alike in all the changing periods of his own life, and by the most hostile parties, it was the fate of this great spirit to be misunderstood; and (to speak candidly) not altogether without his own fault. For he had this defect, that he was no star—whether of the first, second, or any other magnitude—but a whole cluster and fasciculus of stars, out of which it is for every one to compose at pleasure a constellation shaped after his own preconception. Monodynamic men, men of a single talent, are rarely misapprehended; men of multitudinous powers almost always.——If he was no poet—as he would himself often protest, measuring his own pretensions by the Homeric and Shak-

spearian* standard—he was, however, something still better, namely, a *Poem*, an Indico-Grecian Epopee, fashioned by some divinest and purest architect: how else, or by what analytic skill, should I express the nature of this harmonious soul—in which, as in a poem, all was reconciled and fused; in which the good, the beautiful, and the true, were blended and indivisible? Greece was to him the supreme object of devotion—the pole to which his final aspirations pointed; and, universally as he was disposed by his cosmopolitan taste to find and to honour merit, yet did he from his inmost soul yearn, in the very midst of the blooming lands through which he strayed, like any far-travelled Ulysses, for his restoration to a Grecian home; more especially in his latter years. Herder was designed as it were from some breathing Grecian model. Thence came his Grecian reverence for life in all its gradations: like a Brahmin, with a divine Spinozism of the heart, he loved the hum-

* For the sake of English readers I must mention (to those who know any thing of the German literature it is superfluous to mention) that Herder, in common with every man of eminence in modern Germany, paid almost divine honours to Shakspeare: his wife tells us in her interesting Memoirs of him, that he could repeat Hamlet by heart.

blest reptile—the meanest insect—and every blossom of the woods. Thence came the epic style of all his works, which, like a philosophic epos, with the mighty hand and with the impartiality of a God, brought up before the eye* of centuries, and upon a stage of vastest proportions, all times, forms, nations, spirits. Thence also came his Grecian disgust towards all excess, disproportion, or disturbance of equilibrium, this way or that. Thence was it that like a Grecian poem he drew by anticipation round about every feeling and emotion a severe line of beauty, which not even the most impassioned was allowed to overstep.

"Few minds have been learned upon the same grand scale as Herder. The major part pursue only what is most rare and least familiar in science: he, on the contrary, could receive only the great and catholic streams of every science into the mighty depths of his own heaven-reflecting ocean,

* "In the original '*vor das Säkularische auge*;' and in the true meaning of the word 'secular,' as it is exhibited by Milton in the fine expression—'A *secular* bird,' meaning the phœnix,—I might have translated it, before the secular eye: but the vulgar theologic sense of the word in English would have led to a misinterpretation of the meaning. No other equivalent term occurs to me, except *Aeonian*; and *that* is too uncommon to be generally intelligible."

that impressed upon them all its own motion and fluctuation. Others are fastened upon by their own learning as by a withering and strangling ivy; but *his* hung about him as gracefully as the tendrils of a vine, and adorned him with fruit as with clusters of grapes.——How magnificently, how irreconcileably did he blaze into indignation against the creeping and crawling vermin of the times—against German coarseness of taste—against all sceptres in brutal paws—and against the snakes of the age! But would you hear the sweetest of voices, it was *his* voice in the utterance of love—whether for a little child, or for poetry, or for music, or in the tones of mercy and forbearance towards the weak. In general he has been little weighed or appraised, and in parts only—never as a whole. His due valuation he will first find in the diamond scales of posterity; into which scales will assuredly not be admitted the pebbles with which he was pelted by the coarse critics of his days, and the still coarser disciples of Kant.——Two sayings of his survive, which may seem trifling to others; me they never fail to impress profoundly: one was, that on some occasion, whilst listening to choral music that streamed from a neighbouring church as from the bosom of some distant century, he wished, with a sorrowful allusion to the cold frosty spirit of these

times, that he had been born in the middle ages. The other, and a far different, sentiment was—that he would gladly communicate with an apparition from the spiritual world, and that he neither felt nor foreboded any thing of the usual awe connected with such a communication. O the pure soul that already held commerce with spirits! To such a soul this was possible, poetical as *that* soul was; and though it be true that just such souls it is that shudder with the deepest awe before the noiseless and inaudible mysteries that dwell and walk on the other side of death,—to his soul it was possible; for the soul of Herder was itself an apparition upon this earth, and never forgot its native world. At this moment I think I see him; and, potent as death is otherwise to glorify the images of men with saintly transfiguration — yet, methinks, that from the abyss of distance and of sumless elevation, he appears not more radiant or divine than he did here below; and I think of him, far aloft in the heavens and behind the stars, as in his *natural* place, and as of one but little altered from what he was, except by the blotting out of his earthly sorrows."

Note 36.

What I have said in the preceding note respecting Herder, applies still more to Wieland. The English reader can be at no loss for materials on which to judge of his character and works. Mr. Taylor has devoted half of his second volume to him; the *Oberon* has been elegantly translated, and several of his tales have also appeared in English. Of these, I remember to have seen only the *Agathon*, which gives but an inadequate idea of the original.

Falk speaks (page 15, vol. i.) with high admiration of Goethe's biographical sketches of Voss and Wieland, as affording proof of his singular power of entering into the whole character, views, and feelings of men totally unlike himself. The former is before the reader; the latter I have been almost deterred from inserting, by its length; the more so, as the kindness of a friend has furnished me with some original matter concerning Wieland, which is too interesting to be omitted. I have, however, at length resolved to give the greater part of this beautiful memoir as an act of justice, not only to Wieland but to Goethe, who has been accused of a tendency to depreciate his literary cotemporaries. The reader will be enabled to judge

with what reason. I have abridged, wherever I thought I could without essential loss.

" Although it can never beseem an individual to oppose old and time-hallowed customs, and capriciously to alter what our forefathers have regarded with attachment and reverence, yet, were the enchanter's rod which the muse committed to the hand of our departed friend at my command, I would instantly transform this gloomy scene into one of cheerfulness ; these sombre trappings should brighten under your eyes, and a festive, decorated hall, gay with brilliant tapestry and many-coloured garlands, should appear before you. Then might the creations of his blooming fancy attract your eyes and your imagination ; Olympus, with his Gods, brought before you by the Muses, adorned by the Graces, should serve as a living witness, that he who dwelt in such a world of beauty and gladness, and who departed from among us as cheerfully as he had lived, was to be regarded as one of the happiest of men, and by no means to be greeted with lamentations, but with expressions of joy and exultation.

" What, however, I cannot bring before your outward, let me call up to your inward, sense. Eighty years !—How much in a few syllables !

Which of us can venture hastily to run through them, and to make present to himself the full significancy of eighty years, well employed? Which of us can affirm, that he can instantly measure and appreciate the value of a life, in every respect *complete?* If we accompany our friend along the whole journey of his life—if we behold him in boyhood, youth, manhood, and old age, we find that it was his rare felicity to pluck the blossoms of every season; for even old age has its blossoms, and these it was granted him to enjoy to the utmost.

"I have not dared to resist the commands of our honoured masters, and the more willingly speak a few words in memory of him, since they can be but the heralds of what the world will say of him hereafter. In this view, and for his sake, I therefore venture to entreat an indulgent hearing; and if what I shall now deliver (inspired rather by a tried attachment of forty years' standing than by rhetorical skill), though wanting in due coherency, and given but as it were in snatches, should appear neither worthy of him nor of this assembly, I must premise, that nothing is here to be looked for but a preliminary draft, a sketch, a mere table of contents, and, as it were, marginal notes of a future work. And thus let us proceed, at once, to our so dear, valued, nay, sacred subject." * * * *

Here follows a short biographical sketch.

"The effects of Wieland's writings on the public was uninterrupted and lasting. He educated his age, and gave a decided impulse to the taste and to the judgment of his cotemporaries, so that his merits are already recognized, appreciated, and described. And whence proceeded this great influence which he exercised over Germans? It was the consequence of the vigour and the frankness of his character. Man and author were, in him, completely blended; his poetry was life, and his life, poetry. Whether in verse or in prose, he never concealed what was his predominant feeling at the moment, nor what his general frame of mind. From the fertility of his mind, flowed the fertility of his pen. I use the word *pen* here, not as a rhetorical phrase—it has here a peculiar appropriateness; and if pious reverence ever hallowed the quill with which an author wrote his works, assuredly that which Wieland used was worthy of the distinction. For he wrote every thing with his own hand, and very beautifully—at once freely and carefully. He kept what he had written ever before his eyes; examined, altered, improved it; unweariedly cast and recast—nay, had the patience, repeatedly, to transcribe whole works of considerable extent. And this gave his

productions the delicacy, the elegance, the clearness, the natural grace, which cannot be attained by mere drudgery, but by cheerful, genial attention to a work already completed.

" This elaboration of his works sprang from a joyful persuasion which, towards the close of his residence in Switzerland, took possession of him; when the impatience *to produce* was somewhat appeased, and the wish to give the public something finished became more decided, distinct, and active.

" And as, in him, the man and the poet were one person, when we speak of the latter we describe the former. Excitability and mobility—the usual attendants of poetical and oratorical talent—prevailed in him to a high degree; but a moderation, rather acquired than natural, served as a counterpoise to them. Our friend was capable of the highest enthusiasm, and in youth gave himself completely up to it. He did this with the more ardour and persistency, because that beautiful time in which the youth feels within himself the value and the dignity of the Highest and the Best, be it attainable or unattainable, was prolonged for him through several years.

" Those glad, bright regions of the golden time, that paradise of innocence, he dwelt in longer

than others. His natal roof, hallowed by the presence of his father, a learned pastor; the ancient cloister of Bergen, beneath its shade of antique limes, on the shores of the Elbe, where his pious teacher lived in patriarchal activity; the still monastic Tübingen; the simple dwellings of Switzerland, surrounded by gushing brooks, washed by clear lakes, hemmed in by rocks—in all he found his Delphi;—in all, the groves and thickets in which, even when arrived at manhood, he still revelled. Amid such scenes, he felt the mighty attraction of the monuments which the manly innocence of the Greeks has bequeathed to us. He lived in the lofty presence of Cyrus, Araspes, and Panthea. He felt the Platonic spirit move within him; he felt that he needed it, in order to represent to himself and to others these forms,—and the more, since his aim was not so much to call up poetic, shadowy pictures, as to obtain a moral influence on actual beings.

"But precisely because he had the good fortune to linger so long in these higher regions—because he was permitted so long to regard all that he thought, felt, imagined, dreamed, as the most absolute reality,—was the fruit which he was at last compelled to pluck from the tree of knowledge the more bitter to him.

"Who may escape the conflict with the outer world? Our friend, like the rest, was drawn into the strife; reluctantly he submitted to be contradicted by life and experience. And as, after long struggling, he could not succeed in combining these noble images with the ordinary world; these high intents with the necessities of the day, he determined to accept the Actual as the Necessary; and declared what had hitherto appeared to him Truth to be fantastic visions.

"But here, too, the peculiarity, the energy of his mind admirably displayed themselves. Spite of all his plenitude and enjoyment of existence, his fine natural endowments, his honourable intellectual wishes and designs, he felt himself wounded by the world, and cheated of his greatest treasure. Nowhere could he find again in experience what had formed the happiness of so many years of his life, nay, which was its very essence; but he did not waste himself in vain lamentations, such as we hear so many of in prose and in verse; he resolved on producing a counteraction. He declared war on all that cannot be shown to exist in reality; first on platonic love; then on all dogmatizing philosophy, especially the two extremes—the Stoic and the Pythagorean.

"He was the irreconcileable adversary of reli-

gious fanaticism, and of all that appears eccentric to a sound understanding.

"But now, the fear came upon him that he might be going too far—that he might himself be acting fantastically, and he immediately commenced a warfare with the Common-place. He declared himself against all that we are accustomed to understand by the word *Philisterey**, against obstinate pedantry, provincialism (*kleinstädtisches Wesen*), wearisome formalities, bigotted criticism, affected prudery, self-complacent folly, arrogant assumption of dignity, and against all those evil spirits whose name is Legion, distinguish them how we may.

" His treatment of all these topics was uniformly and thoroughly *genial*, without any show of design or self-consciousness. He found himself in the dilemma between the Imaginable and the Real, and being compelled to master or to mitigate both, he must hold fast to himself, and in order to be just he must become manysided."

* This word, I believe, owes its origin to the students of German universities, and was chiefly applied to the towns-people. A Philister is untranslatable, but may, I think, be paraphrased a man of common-places—a pompous dealer in identicalisms and *platitudes*, in a shop-keeping sort of morality and 'gentility,' and in all the common traditional saws and prejudices.—*Transl.*

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Here Goethe proceeds to show the influence of Addison, Steele, and more particularly Shaftesbury, on the formation of Wieland's mind, "the result of which was (to employ a short but universally intelligible word) that Popular Philosophy by which a practical, exercised understanding was called to judge of the moral, as well as the æsthetical, value of things."

He then traces the influence of French literature on Wieland, after which he notices his translation of Shakspeare, a work which he says had been pronounced impossible. "Wieland translated freely, caught the sense of his author, left out what appeared to him untranslatable, and thus gave his country a general notion of the noblest work of an earlier century.

"This translation, however great its influence on Germany, seems to have had little on Wieland himself. He was too entirely contrasted with his author, as appears from the passages he omitted, and still more from the notes, which betray French modes of thinking.

"But, on the other hand, the Greeks, in their severe, chaste, and polished genius, were his most precious models. Their taste became a law to him. Religions, manners, forms of government, all fur-

nished him with occasion for the exercise of his manysidedness; and even while he seems to doubt and to jest, he finds the desired opportunity for the repeated inculcation of his impartial, tolerant, humane doctrines."

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"It is true, an insight into the higher arts of design was requisite for these delineations; and as our friend never enjoyed the sight of the remains of the master-works of antiquity, he sought to raise himself to them by thought—to bring them before him in imagination. He succeded to a degree that must excite our admiration; and would have succeeded perfectly, had not his usual laudable caution kept him from any thing daring; for art generally—antique art particularly—can neither be conceived nor understood without enthusiasm. He who will not begin with astonishment and admiration, can never find entrance to the sanctuary. But our friend was far too cautious for this; and how, indeed, could he, in this single case, make an exception to all his usual rules of life?"

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Goethe next speaks of Wieland's great success in illustrating the works of Horace and of Cicero, and of transporting himself and his readers into their society and times.

"Horace has many points of resemblance with Wieland. Himself a consummate artist, a courtier, and a man of the world, he was an acute and sound judge of life and of art. Cicero was a philosopher, an orator, a statesman, an active citizen. Both attained to high honours and dignities, from obscure beginnings."

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"There are two maxims of translation; the one requires that the author of a foreign nation be brought to us in such a manner that we may regard him as our own; the other, on the contrary, demands of us that we transport ourselves over to him, and adopt his situation, his mode of speaking, his peculiarities*. The advantages of both are sufficiently known to all instructed persons, from masterly examples.

"Probably no one ever so intimately felt what an intricate business translation is as he. How deeply was he convinced that it is not the word, but the spirit, that quickens.

"Let us but observe how, in his introductions, he first labours to transport us back into the

* In translating Goethe, I have always endeavoured to follow the latter 'maxim.' I have never succeeded to my wish, but I would at least disclaim all thought of making Goethe speak like an Englishman.—*Transl.*

times, and to make us acquainted with the persons; how he then makes his author speak to us in a manner familiar to our sense and to our ear; and at last seeks to explain, and clear up by notes, many particulars which remain obscure, or which excite doubt or repugnance. We see clearly that by these three processes he has mastered his subject; and thus he takes the most conscientious pains to place us in the same situation, that we may share his insight, and thence, his enjoyment."

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Goethe then alludes to Wieland's political opinions and conduct, and proceeds to speak of the journal edited by him, the *Deutsche Mercur*, which he says, "through many years, may be taken as a clue to German literature." He concludes with a remark worth noting.

"More contributions than he expected, or even desired, flowed in upon the editor; his success raised up imitators; similar periodical works forced themselves on the public, first monthly, then weekly, then daily; till at length they produced that Babylonian confusion, of which we were, and are, witnesses; and the true source of which is, that everybody wants to speak and nobody to hear.

"What sustained the value and the dignity of the *Deutsche Mercur*, for many years, was our

friend's inborn liberability. Wieland was not formed to be the head of a party: he who acknowledges moderation as his leading maxim must not lend himself to any onesidedness. Whatever excited his active mind, he sought to bring to its right level by the aid of good sense and taste; and thus he treated his *collaborateurs*, for whom he was carried away by no enthusiasm. He sometimes mortified, and even alienated, those whom he loved and valued, by disapproving comments."

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"It has been acutely remarked by some foreigners, that German authors take less heed of the public than those of other nations; and that, therefore, it is easy to discern in their writings the man educating himself, the man who wants to owe something to himself; and consequently, to read his character. This was peculiarly true of Wieland; and it would be the more interesting to follow his writings and his life with this view, since suspicions have been cast on his character, drawn from these very writings. Many men still misunderstand him, because they imagine the Manysided must be indifferent,—the Mobile must be infirm and inconsistent. They do not reflect that *character* regards the Practical alone. Only in what a man does, in what he continues to

do, and persists in doing, can he show character; and, in this sense, never was there a firmer, more consistent man than Wieland. When he gave himself up to the variety of his sensations, to the mobility of his thoughts, and permitted no single impression to obtain dominion over him, he showed by that very process the firmness and certainty of his mind. He loved to play with his conceptions, but never—I take all his cotemporaries to witness—never with his opinions. And thus he won and retained numerous friends."

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Goethe thus mentions his retiring to Osmannstadt.

"But in the autumn of his days he was destined to experience the influence of the times, and, in an unlooked-for way, to enter upon a new life, a new youth. The blessing of benign peace had long rested upon Germany; external serenity and quiet were in beautiful harmony with internal humane, cosmopolitan feelings. The peaceful citizen appeared no longer to need his city's walls; he escaped from them, he longed for the country. The security of the land-owner gave confidence to all; the free life, in the midst of nature, attracted all; and as man, born for society, often cheats himself with the sweet dream, that he could live

better, more conveniently, more joyfully in seclusion, so did Wieland, already in the possession of the highest literary leisure*, look around for a more poetical retirement; and having bought an estate not far from Weimar, determined to pass the rest of his life there."

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"His rural happiness was interrupted by the death of his beloved friend†, and the excellent, careful partner of his life. He laid the dear remains in his own soil; and while he resolved to quit the scene of his past happiness, reserved to himself the space between these two beloved beings, as his own final resting-place. And thither did our honoured brethren accompany, nay, bear him, thus fulfilling his pleasant will, that posterity should honour his grave amid the cheerful aspect of living groves and thickets.

"Not without reason did he return to the town. His absence from his noble patroness, the Duchess Mother, had often embittered his retirement. He felt too much what it cost him to lose her society.

* His pupil, the Grand Duke, continued his salary to him for life.—*Transl.*

† Sophie Brentano, daughter of his first love, Sophie von Guttermann, afterwards Frau von la Roche, so often mentioned in Goethe's Autobiography.—*Transl.*

* * * * * * "He returned, and was henceforth a member of her house and court.

"Wieland was truly formed for the higher circles; the highest would have been his proper element; for, as he never wished to lead, but willingly took part in every thing, and expressed himself with moderation on every subject, he could not fail to be an agreeable companion; and would have been still more so among a lighter nation, where all conversation were not engaged in too earnestly.

"For his poetical as well as his literary labours were directed to Life; and if he did not always seek a practical end, a practical aim was never far from his eye. Hence his thoughts were always clear, his expressions distinct, intelligible to all; and as, with all his extensive learning, he constantly adhered to the interest of the day, followed it out, and occupied his mind with it, his conversation was thoroughly various and enlivening; nor have I known any one who welcomed with more pleasure and cordiality, or answered with more animation, whatever was happily said by another.

"With such modes of thinking and social habits, with the honest intention of acting beneficially upon his age, we ought not to reproach him

for conceiving an aversion to the modern schools of philosophy. So long as Kant gave out only the prelude to his great views, and, in agreeable forms, seemed to express himself problematically on the most momentous subjects, he stood at no great distance from our friend; but when the enormous philosophical structure was erected, all those who had gone on freely—poetizing or philosophizing—must needs see in it a frowning keep or fortress, by which their pleasant excursions over the field of experience would be controled and abridged.

"But not only the philosopher, the poet also, had much to dread from this new turn given to the minds of men, as soon as any considerable mass were affected by it. For although, at first, it appeared as if its views were exclusively confined to science, then to morals, or subjects most immediately dependant on them; it was easy to see that, after endeavouring to lay the foundations of these weighty questions of higher science and of morals more deeply and firmly than had ever yet been done,—after acquiring a more rigorous and consistent judgment, unfolded out of the very depths of human nature,—the adherents of this system would soon apply the same principles to matters of taste; and consequently would endea-

vour entirely to set aside all individual propensities, accidents of education, and national peculiarities, and to establish a universal law as the *norma* or standard of criticism.

"And accordingly this took place; and a new epoch arose in poetry, which was in necessary opposition to our friend, and he to it. From this time he had to endure many an unfair judgment. This, however, affected him little; and I mention the circumstance, only because the conflict that then arose in German literature is still by no means decided; and because a person who really wishes to do justice to Wieland's merits and to defend his memory, must be well informed as to the posture of things,—the rise as well as the consequences of opinions, the character and talents of the persons concerned; must know the powers and the merits of both sides; and, in order to act impartially, must, so to speak, belong to both parties.

"But leaving these greater or lesser feuds, I must mention one important event in Wieland's life. Our peaceful retreat, sheltered by hills and mountains, amid sweetly-watered vallies, had long been threatened, though not actually scared, by war. When, at length, the eventful day arose, which plunged us into amazement and terror,—when the fate of the world was decided in our familiar

walks,—even in these fearful moments, which our friend met with perfect composure, his good fortune did not forsake him. He was preserved, first by the precautions of a young and intrepid friend, and then by the attentions of the French commanders*. He had soon to bear, in common with us all, the afflicting loss of Amalie. Court and city vied with each other in their endeavours to console him. Soon afterwards he received, from two emperors, distinctions which he had never sought nor looked for.

"But, whether in sorrow or in joy, he was always like himself; and herein he enjoyed the privilege of delicately constituted natures, whose tempered susceptibility can meet good or evil fortune with moderation.

"Most admirable did he appear, corporeally and mentally, after the grievous accident which befel him at so advanced an age, by the overturn of a carriage. The painful consequences of his fall, the tedium of his recovery, he bore with the most perfect equanimity; and consoled himself and his friends, saying that he had never met with such a disaster before, and that it might well seem

* The account of Wieland's interview with Napoleon was, I think, published in the journals of the time, in this country.—*Transl.*

fair in the sight of heaven that he should thus bear his portion of the evils of humanity. His constitution recovered with the elasticity of youth, and afforded a beautiful proof how delicacy and purity of mind contribute to physical force.

" As his philosophy stood this test, his accident occasioned no change in his way of thinking or of living. After his recovery, social as before, he took part in the common topics of court and city, and, with solicitous interest, in the labours of his associates. How much soever his eye seemed directed to the understanding and utilizing of the Earthly, it was impossible for him, with his high gifts, to withdraw himself from the Super-mundane, the Super-sensual. And here, too, that conflict which we have thought it our duty to allude to above, came remarkably to view; for while he appeared to decline all that lies beyond the boundary of universal consciousness, beyond the sphere of what can be affected by experience, he could never refrain from seeking to look, if not to step, beyond the line he had so sharply defined, and to construct and figure, after his manner, that extra-mundane world of which all the natural powers of our minds give us no knowledge or tidings.

" Familiar from his youth with the mysteries of antiquity, his cloudless, cheerful temper led

him to shun all that was gloomy. But he did not deny, that rude and sensual man was first led to higher conceptions by these strange outward images; was awakened by presignificant symbols to mighty and soul-illuminating ideas—to the faith in one All-ruling God—to a perception of the value of virtue—till the hope in the continuance of existence was purged from the terrors of gloomy superstition, and from the vitiated demands of sensuality."

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"Though called upon by our honoured masters to speak some few words of the departed, I should gladly have declined it, from the conviction that not a transient hour, nor a few light, unconnected leaves, but whole years, and many well-considered and connected volumes are necessary, to do justice to his memory. I undertook this duty only in the thought that what I have laid before you might serve as an introduction to what may be better done hereafter by others."

The few sentences that follow occur in the *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

"Without all question, Wieland had the finest natural endowments. He had early formed himself in that ideal region in which youth loves to

linger; but as this had been defaced and wounded by what is called experience, by intercourse with the world and women, he threw himself entirely on the side of the Real, and pleased himself and others in the conflict of the two worlds, in which, between jest and earnest, his talent displayed itself most beautifully in that light warfare. How many of his most brilliant productions appeared during my academical years! *Musarion* had the strongest effect upon me. I can still remember the very spot where I saw the first sheets of it, which Oeser showed me. Here it was that I felt as if I saw the Antique resuscitated, and living before me. All that is plastic in Wieland's genius, here displayed itself in its highest perfection. One easily pardoned, in these works, a sort of gay hostility to *exalté* modes of thinking, which, by a very easy misapplication to actual life, often degenerate into mere fantastic dreams. One forgave the author for pursuing what is commonly esteemed true and venerable with ridicule, the more readily, because he proves by it how much trouble it gave him."

RECOLLECTIONS OF WIELAND.

[Communicated by a Friend.]

"There are few efforts at recollection of which the results are more mortifying than when we try to recall what we have recently heard from so brilliant a converser as Madame de Staël, or so magnificent a monoloquist as Coleridge; but it is even worse, if we are desirous of bringing back the impressions of our youth, when we had heard and seen any one of the great men with whose name the world is filled. I take credit to myself for great good nature in consenting to expose the poverty of my own reminiscences of Wieland.

"It was in November, 1801, that I accompanied the poet Seume and the painter Schnor on a pedestrian excursion in Saxony, in the course of which we made calls upon the great men of Weimar, the spurious as well as the genuine; upon Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Wieland, and—Kotzebue; but I will speak only of Wieland.—We found him living in his Dutch-like country residence at Osmannstadt, near Weimar; the retirement in which he had spent a long life of literary labour. His appearance by no means excited the awe which Goethe eminently, and Herder also, and even Schiller, in lower degrees, spread around them. He

was then approaching his seventieth year, and was no longer surrounded by that halo of reputation which distinguished him in his youth and middle age. His personal appearance was nothing less than commanding; for his cast of countenance was precisely that (excepting a small and handsome ear) which the Greeks idealized into the youthful fawn and aged satyr. He had a large mouth, a broad flattened nose, little gray eyes, and a yellowish complexion. The only agreeable feature of his face was a very spacious forehead, marked by long horizontal lines, which being straight could hardly be called wrinkles. His head was covered with a black velvet skull-cap which he never laid aside, even at the Duke's table, and which, connected in my imagination with the pictures of the old puritan divines of the seventeenth century, threw something of a sacred air over an otherwise very sensual countenance. As soon as he began to talk, however, his placid and passionless hilarity, and very clear-headed and acute understanding, greatly improved his appearance, so that I left him, after an hour's chat, with a feeling of kindness I did not dare to entertain towards any other of the literary magnates of Weimar.

" He had lost his wife but a few weeks before, and in answer to the condolence of my companions

spoke of her with great cheerfulness,—'She was my guardian angel for five-and-thirty years, and at my age my feeling towards her will never weaken. What I have once tenderly loved never dies for me. I help myself with illusions. She is dead only to my outward sense, and that is certainly painful.' We enquired about his family. It had been numerous. He said, with a *naivetè* of expression common to the German and French, but which we cannot literally render in English, '*Aucun auteur n'a fait tant d'enfans et de livres que moi.*' The children of his body amounted to fourteen; the volumes of his collected works, including the appendix, amount to between fifty and sixty; besides an immense labour as editor, and infinite translations from Shakspeare, Lucian, Aristophanes, Horace, Cicero, *&c.* We conversed on the most interesting topics of the day, or rather of the age; on Buonaparte, the French revolution, *&c.* The anti-enthusiastic turn of his mind led to opinions which it gave me as little pleasure in hearing him repeat in conversation as in reading them in his Agathon, Agathodæmon, Aristippus, *&c.* You are acquainted with the mild epicureanism of Wieland's philosophy, which he asserted on all occasions. In the course of a short conversation he found an occasion of expressing his

approbation of Buonaparte's assumption of power as the only state of things for which France was fit. And it startled me not a little when he said that Buonaparte had done wisely in re-establishing the catholic church as an organ of the state. 'We protestants,' he said, 'are habitually unjust to the catholics, and false in our representations of their system. Theirs is, after all, the real christianity, and in my mind preferable to the motley thing we have called the reformation.' Of the reformation he also spoke further, and very much as Mr. W. Taylor has done in his Survey of German poetry. He said that it had retarded the progress of philosophy for centuries;—that Erasmus, Melancthon, and a few others, were on the right road, but that Luther had spoiled all by making the people a party to what should have been left to the thinkers. Hence a series of horrid wars throughout Europe, and the generation of malignant passions in individuals. But for this, liberty and science and philanthropy would have made rapid progress. There were great men in Italy especially, who were crushed entirely. I recollect being mortified at my inability to do more than express my strong dissent from this view of the subject.

"It was not till the year 1804 that I saw Wieland again, when he had become the table-com-

panion of the Duchess Dowager of Weimar, with whom I frequently saw him. Nothing could be more delightful than the dinners the Duchess used to give. She and Wieland were like the grandfather and grandmother of a family party, to whom in reverence every one of the company addressed their discourse, and who left their younger companions to defray the cost of the conversation. Wieland never hesitated giving his opinion upon whatever topic was brought forward. He had been in the habit of doing so for a quarter of a century, every month, in his German Museum; so that, had he had a Boswell at his elbow, his biographer would have found his book anticipated. He talked readily about himself, and had not that fastidious fear of being thought egotistic which is a bitter foe to, and destructive of, the best of conversation. One day I said that the first great book I read was Pilgrim's Progress. This set him in motion, and he talked delightfully about his own youth: — 'Oh I am pleased to hear that—for it was precisely so with me, I learned my spelling in a German Bunyan; your English authors have always had a great effect on me. There's another of your dissenting writers—Mrs. Rowe. My very first book was an imitation of her Letters from the dead to the living. To be sure I went to the Latin for poetry. When

I was eighteen I wrote a didactic poem. I was in love then with Fräulein Guttermann. It was an imitation too; and I said to myself, Poor Lucretius; it will be all over with you now!—nobody will read you any longer.' In this there was probably a playful exaggeration of his own vanity; which, however, did not leave him, and always assumed an amiable form.

"In after life English literature still retained its influence over him, he said, but in an opposite direction. Gay and Prior became his favourites, and Prior suggested to him his *Comische Erzählungen*. How widely Wieland had departed from his former tastes may be inferred from this, that on my enquiring what French novels he recommended he said, 'Of Count Hamilton *opera omnia*.' He even spoke favourably of the forgotten novels of Prevost, and of those of Crebillon which ought to be forgotten.

"On a *tête á tête* drive with him from Weimar to the Duchess's country-house at Tiefurt, he spoke freely of his own writings. He said that he had gone over his *Musarion* with Goethe, line by line, and did not think there was a passage that could be altered for the better. I had remarked to him that I thought his prose peculiarly hard to translate from its diffusiveness. 'That is,' he re-

plied, ‘ the characteristic of my writings. The Greeks called it Στωμυλία, but I do not think there is any absolute *Geschwätz* (mere prattle) in my writings.’ He was fully sensible that his taste was French. He called the French the Greeks of modern times, incapable of republican virtue; and from whose revolution therefore the world had no benefit to expect but a more liberal encouragement of the arts and sciences.

“ On one occasion (1804-5) I had obtained a sight of the just-published correspondence of Gleim, Heinse, *&c.*; and finding he had not yet seen it, I remarked, ‘ You do not then know what —— writes of you.’ [I regret that the writer’s name has escaped me; I should have thought it Gleim himself; but I do not know that he ever visited Switzerland, nor would Wieland perhaps have applied to him the remark that followed.] ‘ No! but I should be glad to know:’—‘ He writes—There is here at Bodmer’s a remarkably clever young man—[Wieland was in fact twenty or twenty-one during his visit to Bodmer] he is a great talker and great writer; only it is a pity (*schade!*) that one can foresee he will soon be exhausted (*erschöpft*)’. ‘ *Ich erschöpft!*’ exclaimed the old man, lifting up both his hands—‘ I am now in my seventy-third year, and, with God’s help, I mean now to write more

than he ever did in all his life; and it shall last longer too.'——This unconcealed opinion of himself not being accompanied by any harshness or intolerance towards others (for he was an indulgent critic), gave no offence. I recollect hearing him express but one strikingly unfavourable judgment of any one of his contemporaries, and that was remarkable both from the time when it was uttered and because it was at variance with the opinion of his countrymen. On the 9th of May, 1805, Schiller died; he was buried on the night of the 11th, and on the 13th I dined with the Duchess Amelia. The late Mr. Hare Naylor was of the party, and Wieland, of course. The great man so recently departed was a principal subject of our conversation, and Wieland, who spoke of him personally with his characteristic kindness and good feeling, with respect to his poetic talents, said, 'Schiller was a great philosophical and lyric poet, but ought not to have devoted himself to the drama; his mind was not dramatic.'

"It was a few months after this that I saw him for the last time. I called to take leave, and finding him writing, I apologized. 'I am merely copying,' he said, 'I am going over again my Aristophanes' (which he was publishing in successive numbers of the *Attisches Musæum*) 'And you have

no amanuensis, Herr Hofrath?'—'No; nor ever had. I believe one-sixth of my time has been spent in copying, and I am convinced it has been useful to me. One whose business is composition, and that too of works of invention and imagination, is benefited by the *sedative* effect of a semi-mechanical occupation.'

"He took leave of me with a warm expression of good-will, and with a cast of melancholy with which a very aged person must be affected on taking leave of a foreign traveller. He survived till 1813, when he died in his eighty-first year."

H. C. R.

Note 37.

"However Wieland's attempt at rendering Shakspeare may have been surpassed by Schlegel's classical translation, Wieland will ever retain the merit of having been the first to give the German public any adequate idea of Shakspeare. Schlegel himself was so fully sensible of Wieland's merits, that, in his translation of the Midsummer Night's

Dream, he has given the whole farce of Pyramus and Thisbe word for word, in the extremely burlesque rime of his predecessor. This was done with Wieland's permission—and thankfully acknowledged in the preface,—at a time too (1800) when Wieland's Shakspeare was generally regarded as antiquated, and was half forgotten.

"Goethe's enthusiastic admiration, however, was half gratitude. The work had for him a *pretium affectionis*. He had read Shakspeare in his youth, for the first time, in that form."—(*Ad. H.*)

Note 38.

"This expression does honour to both poets, and especially to Goethe. The motives which prompted it can be little known in England. The new school (that of Tieck, the Schlegels, &c.) had entrenched themselves behind the universal reputation of Goethe, chiefly for the purpose of pulling down Wieland; and we are compelled reluctantly to confess that the German public suffered itself to be carried

away by the stream, and were guilty of the greatest ingratitude to Wieland. He had presided over German literature for more than half a century, and had advanced the taste of the nation; nay more, had popularized philosophy, to a degree which it is impossible to calculate. But the new school utterly disregarded this; they held him up to reprobation as a corrupter of the people, an imitator of the French, and called him the German Voltaire,—a title the infamy of which those alone can estimate who know the strong disgust with which the tone of that extraordinary man, on subjects of religion and morals, is regarded by the German nation, so preposterously represented by some half-informed English writers, as generally inclined to scepticism.

"The reproach thus conveyed had an appearance of truth. The object of all his writings was, like that of Voltaire, to combat prejudices; and his philosophy has unquestionably a sceptical, and, in part, an Epicurean cast.

"In character, however, he was entirely unlike Voltaire. His *life* was pure and simple, as that of a child. But the school whose grand object it was to introduce religious mysticism and the romance of the middle ages, never could forgive Wieland what he had done to enlighten the nation. They accused

him of infidelity, because in his *Agothedæmon*, for instance, he endeavoured to represent christianity in the moral grandeur it possesses, even to those who do not believe in the miracles related in the New Testament.

"Two merits, however, the new school acknowledged in Wieland; the having first awakened the taste for the Romantic by his *Oberon*;—this indeed it was impossible to deny; secondly, they allowed that if Wieland had continued to write with the same simplicity he showed in his *Pervonte* (so much eulogized by Goethe), his talent for romantic and chivalrous poetry would unquestionably have raised him to a very high rank.

"Goethe's judgment is as candid as it is accurate and clear-sighted, when he says that a future generation, free from all these feelings of party and of prejudice, will know how to estimate Wieland."

(*Ad. H.*)

Having put together these materials concerning Herder and Wieland, I cannot better conclude my humble labour as a compiler of illustrative notes, than with this striking passage from Jean Paul. I have said nothing of Schiller because Mr. Carlyle's

beautiful life of him (which was translated into German at Goethe's desire) leaves nothing to be said or wished.

"Herder, Wieland, and Goethe were allied in the lofty faculty of looking with equal eye at the whole world. In all nations and ages, in all the great mutations of human things, they saw and acknowledged the rights, the advantages,—the lights and the shadows, with an impartial allsidedness. This cosmopolitanism of glance they had in common:—with this difference—Wieland excelled in seizing the character of historical persons (as for instance the Emperor Augustus), Herder the character of masses, as nations and ages; Goethe, both. Schiller had it neither for different nations, nor, still less, for the Muses of different nations."

(Kleine Bücherschau.)

NOTE. (omitted) Page 98, vol. ii.

There is an account of this ludicrous transaction in the *Tag-und-Jahres Hefte* (1802,) told in Goethe's tone of quiet superiority. I thought of extracting it, but the meannesses and squabbles of men of genius, or even of talent, are an unwelcome subject. Besides, Kotzebue is fallen into such complete contempt in Germany, that it is not worth while to dwell on the tricks of his vanity. Having alluded more than once to Mr. William Taylor's Survey of German Poetry, and uniting, as I do, admiration for that gentleman's learning and talents, to, I might almost say, hereditary respect for his person and character, I must in honesty confess that I dissent entirely from his view of the general tendencies of German literature; and particularly from his estimate of Goethe and Kotzebue, which, indeed, to all educated Germans, appears the strangest and most extravagant paradox.

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GOETHE,

CONSIDERED AS A MAN OF ACTION.

A CONTRIBUTION

TOWARDS THE UNDERSTANDING OF HIS CHARACTER,

BY

FRIEDRICH VON MÜLLER.

THE following is the substance of a Speech pronounced by Herr von Müller, Chancellor of Weimar, at a meeting of the Academy of Useful Sciences (*gemeinnützige Wissenschaften*) at Erfurt, on the 12th of September, 1832. I am indebted for it to the kindness of one best able to appreciate its truth and value.

In the third volume will be found short biographical sketches, by the same distinguished author, of the Grand Duke Karl August, and of the Grand Duchess Luise. These will suffice to defend Goethe from the charge of exaggeration or servility, which some passages of his letters might otherwise draw upon him.

S. A.

GOETHE,

CONSIDERED

AS A MAN OF ACTION.

THE memory of the illustrious dead cannot be more worthily honoured than by an attentive consideration of their acts and of the peculiarities of their modes of thinking.

Every superior man lives a two-fold life; the one *outward*, public; affected, and, as it were, forced upon him, by his station in the world, by the obligations it imposes and the obstacles it throws in his way; by its advantages and disadvantages; by its thousand accidents; the other, *inward*, invisible; resting on the deepest and most peculiar properties of the man, which indeed he is (consciously or unconsciously) ever endea-

vouring to mirror forth, to display in that outer life, but which reveals itself in all its genuineness in the noblest natures alone; and even in them is still shrouded beneath a delicate mysterious veil.

In our endeavours to understand and to estimate a remarkable and truly peculiar character, we must not therefore stop at that outer and more obvious life; we must strive to penetrate into the inner and more concealed one. We must seek to unravel the several threads of the band which connects them together; we must point out their mutual operation; and, as the true artist creates a living portrait, not alone by faithfully copying separate features, but by seizing the general character of the face, so must we strive to embrace the propensities and the actions of the individual in their totality.

Who ever afforded richer materials for such a grand picture of a life than Goethe?—

whose inward history and genial nature contain moments of such exhaustless wealth, that glorious and remarkable as was his outer life, the inner far surpassed it in interest, and will ever continue to hold out infinite attractions to the psychological curiosity of his cotemporaries and of posterity.

But what hand were competent to attempt, as yet, to solve so difficult a problem?

If affectionate reverence would impose on itself as a duty to collect the several and distinct features of this manysided being; to treasure them up, and thus to afford authentic faithful studies for the composition of a great Whole, this would unquestionably be the best and safest preliminary labour.

Invited to speak in memory of the great Departed, in the presence of this honoured association of which he was a member, and

the combined powers of which are devoted to the advancement of the practical sciences, it appears to me appropriate to the place to lead your attention more particularly to that unwearied practical activity which was one of his characteristic qualities;—the more, because the confidential intercourse of many years enables me to bear witness to it with certainty.

Men of genius are prone to wander beyond the boundaries of reality. In their endeavours to find new and stimulant food for the sensibility, they often disdain the narrow limits of social order; and devoted with onesided exclusiveness to the ideal, neglect the study of the actual world, and of the obligations it imposes.

In Goethe, on the contrary, we find from his earliest youth two usually conflicting qualities intimately allied;—a boundless productiveness of fancy; and a childlike, pure feeling for nature, which saw life in

everything, and everywhere strove to take active part in life.

This indestructible love for nature, and for practical action, winds through the whole course of his life; it sharpened his eye for every external phenomenon; led the often restless activity of his spirit to the Real; formed the counterpoise and the remedy of his passions; and, like a protecting genius, preserved him amid perilous labyrinths from error; and, amid romantic adventures, from being mastered by a romantic temperament.

Although the boy early delighted to create around him a world of fairy-land and fiction, the busy life of his native city—the thronged and opulent mart of German trade and industry—made a no less lively impression on his imagination. It was easy to him to place himself in the precise circumstances of others; he sought to sympathize in every peculiar form of human

existence, and to make himself master of the Idea, conditions, and technical advantages of the various occupations of man.

With unwearied pertinacity he strove to discover the solution of every striking natural phenomenon; he wandered with extasy through forest and over mountain; and what he beheld remained in his mind—a picture. And with the same genial warmth with which he received it into himself, did he express and depict it to others: drawing, "that most moral of all accomplishments," as he afterwards called it, became to him an organ of the understanding which subsisted between him and nature—a symbolical language of his inward perceptions.

When, at a later period, the great problems of the moral world, when his own religious cravings, excited the youth to intense enquiry,—nay, often threatened to confound and distract his intellect,—he found the inward peace he sought, only in the re-

cognition of simple, eternal, universal laws of nature. Every remarkable outward phenomenon strengthened in his soul the deep feeling of the great truth, that the necessary condition of all art is a clear insight into nature. When he endeavours to account to himself for the overpowering impression made upon him by Strasburg cathedral, instead of gay pictures of the fancy, conceptions of infinite order and harmony present themselves to him; and he finds them embodied in the relation of countless beautifully executed parts to one great, consistent, systematic Whole.

The Future had indeed no happiness in store for him so desirable in his eyes as the laurel of the poet; but, however mighty was the impression which even his earliest productions made on the whole of Germany, however seductive the image of the free unfettered life of a poet appeared to himself, he soon felt that, above all things, an

honourable station in civil life was necessary to him; and that the poet could create and image forth with the more freedom and fertility, the broader the substructure of practical activity and experience on which he rested.

In this persuasion he gladly accepted the honourable call of his young and princely friend to Weimar, and the world was not a little surprised at seeing the author of Werther and Goetz of Berlichingen become at once, and without any intermediate step, the counsellor of state of a reigning prince.

In this situation did his strong natural bent towards the actual knowledge of natural objects, and their effect on the general welfare of a people, attain its most apt development; inclination now became duty, and this again exalted inclination into unwearied energy.

Goethe himself, in the history of his bo-

tanical studies, has told us, in the most delightful manner, how his taste for that science was first awakened by the free and joyous life of a hunter; how it was then stimulated by friendly intercourse with instructed men; and at length, by the growing feeling of the insufficiency of actual systems and nomenclatures, urged on to that fruitful maturity to which we owe his "Metamorphosis of Plants," which he himself described as a Heart-lightening (*Herzenserleichterung**).

By the same process was the higher feeling for mineralogy and mining, for osteology and comparative anatomy, awakened and matured: in every department, living facts and instances, and the divination of the deepest ground-work, the most invariable conformity to primeval laws:—in none, a dark, arid toiling in the narrow enclosure of a cell.

* Vide Note 4, vol. I.

With free, open glance did he traverse every variety of country, and ponder how the peculiarities of each could be turned to advantage; how its defects could be remedied, its wants supplied. On the lofty mountain clothed with primeval forests, and in the depth of chasms or shafts, Nature advanced to meet her darling and her servant, and there revealed to him many a longed-for secret.

"Und manches Jahr des stillen Erdenlebens
Ward so zum Zeugen edelsten Bestrebens*!"

Every acquisition made in quiet and retirement he immediately sought to render available to public ends. He endeavoured to infuse new life into the art of mining, and for that purpose to make himself familiar with all the technical aids to it. Chemical experiments were zealously pursued; new roads were cut; a better hydraulic sy-

* And many a year of the stillest earthly life
Thus became witness to the noblest endeavour.

stem was reduced to practice; fertile meadows created by skillful draining; and, in a continual conflict with nature, the victory of an enlightened and inflexible will was won.

But never can it be acknowledged with sufficient gratitude, how much the fresh sentiment for nature, the cheerful enjoyment of life and action, which were proper to his exalted master, favoured our Goethe. For not only did they open a wider field to his manysided labours and acts; not only did they afford him vigourous support, but care was even taken that the business of his public office should never trouble or obstruct the freedom of the Poet, and the Searcher into Nature.

With what depth and tenderness does his grateful sense of this consideration break forth in one of his letters from Rome! He writes thus to his beloved prince:—

"How much do I thank you for the gra-

cious gift of this inestimable leisure. And since from youth up my mind had taken this bent, I could never have been tranquil had I not attained this end.

"My connection with public business has arisen out of my personal connection with yourself; suffer that a new relation to you should, after so many years, arise out of those which have already subsisted. I may venture to say that, in this year and half of solitude, I have found myself again. But as what? as Artist? Whatever I am, however, you will know how to appreciate and to use me. During a life of incessant activity you have gone on acquiring extent and acuteness in that true science of a prince—to what several ends to use several men—as every one of your letters clearly shows me: to a judgement so formed I willingly submit myself.

"Ask me concerning the symphony you meditate playing; I will always readily

and honestly give you my opinion on it. Let me fill out the whole circle of my existence by your side; so will my powers be like the waters of a newly-opened spring flowing from a hill, collected and purified, and easily turned hither or thither at your will.

"I already see wherein my journey has profited me—how it has enlightened me—how it has cheerfullized* my existence. As you have hitherto maintained me, so do

* *Erheitert,* literally *cheerfullized.* I hope I may be forgiven for using a word which we exceedingly want, and which is familiar and endeared to me by its association with the only person I ever heard use it, and from whose benign heart it seemed to spring naturally to his lips. To 'cheerfullize existence,' indeed, expressed the object of his being. But if Bentham pursued the happiness of others with a singleness, purity, intensity, and elevation of will which it would be unreasonable to look for in his great cotemporary and fellow-labourer, it is not the less true that their labours converge and meet at one point—the encreasing the means and sources of enjoyment, the diminishing the causes of pain.—*Transl.*

you provide for me henceforth; you do better for me than I can do for myself—than I can ask or wish. I have now seen so large and fair a portion of the world; and the result is, that only with you and yours would I live; and, indeed, I shall be to you more than I have often hitherto been, if you will let me do only what no one but I can do, and commit the rest to others.

"Your ways of thinking, as you give me to understand them in your letters, are so beautiful, are so honourable to me (even to the shaming of me), that I can only say, 'Lord, here I am; do with thy servant even as thou wilt.'"

And another time he gives utterance to his inmost aspirations in the following words:—

"If it be allowed me to add a wish, which I cherish against the time of my return, it were, immediately to travel through all your possessions, as a foreigner, with en-

tirely fresh eyes; and, with the habit of viewing other countries and people, to be permitted to judge of yours. I should, after my manner, make to myself a new picture; attain to a complete conception; and, as it were, qualify myself anew for every kind of service to which your goodness, your confidence, may call me. With you and yours is my heart and mind, though the ruins of a world lay in the other balance. Man needs little: love, and security in his connection with the once-chosen and once-given, he cannot do without."

And wishes so noble were met by the kindest acquiescence. Released from the Presidency of the Chamber, and of the Commission of War, Goethe, after his return from Italy, was enabled to devote himself freely, and as he would; now to the Muses, now to separate branches of practical action, as his genius prompted. At this period began his nearer connection

with the University of Jena, and the undertaking of the management of the court theatre at Weimar, which had so remarkable an effect on the formation of the German stage, and constituted a normal school of simple, refined acting.

It happened to many of Goethe's near friends and associates, that he appeared to them quite changed after his Italian tour; nay, that they knew not how to understand him, when they thought they could no longer perceive in him that free joyous sense of existence, — that unrestrained, confiding, captivating vivacity, with which they had formerly been wont to see him seize the most dissimilar objects. And thus he now seemed to one grown cold; to another, reserved or self-seeking; to most, a puzzle;—and more recently have similar complaints been heard.

Let us all seek to hold fast by the im-

pression which an amiable presence makes upon us at our first interview: the image which we have once received into our minds with love, must for ever be like; we are apt to forget that the more rich an individual is in life and in endowments, the more manysided will be his development, his education, his outward changes, in the course of a varied, busy life.

Goethe did in truth return from Italy, in many points of view, another man; he was richer, riper, more self-collected, more sedate. A long-cherished, uncontrolable longing was stilled; the measureless world of Art had risen before him in the fulness of actual sight (*Anschauung*).

As was consonant with his nature, reflection had held equal pace with enjoyment; the lofty standard which he perceived in the eternal monuments of the highest masters he applied to himself; and thus clearly distinguished the limits of human endeavour,

and the unprofitableness of a slight complacent dilettantism. On the one side the significancy and the worth of life were in a high degree sensible to him; on the other, the grand truth was become conviction, that, in order to effect the utmost Possible, we must carefully beware of all striving after the Impossible, the Unattainable;—of all subdivision of our powers and feelings.

He knew well what large and urgent demands would be made upon him from every side after his return. The light of enchantment in which our imaginations are wont to dress Italy, had raised the most exaggerated expectations of the effect this land of beauty and wonder would produce on the genius of Goethe. People seemed to look for nothing less from his return than the promulgation of a new gospel.

And thus it was quite natural, that to avoid frittering himself away, and (with his heightened susceptibility to outward im-

pressions) to sustain himself in his own independence against the world, he should often be forced to shut himself up from it; nay, not seldom to hide and veil the inward and onward working of his noblest projects and desires.

From Rome—from the centre of the richest and the loftiest existence — date the severe maxims of self-denial which he followed during the whole of his subsequent life, and in which he found the sole secure pledge of inward peace and equanimity.

However powerfully the magic circle of art allured him, it could not diminish his love to nature. I may be permitted here to quote an invaluable passage from one of his letters to the Grand Duchess Luise of Weimar, written from Rome.

"The smallest production of nature has the circle of its completeness within itself; and I have only need of eyes to see with,

in order to discover the relative proportions. I am perfectly sure that within this circle, however narrow, an entirely genuine existence is enclosed. A work of art, on the other hand, has its completeness *out of itself*; the Best lies in the Idea of the artist, which he seldom or never reaches; all the rest lies in certain conventional rules, which are, indeed, derived from the nature of art and of mechanical processes, but still are not so easy to decipher as the laws of living nature. In works of art there is much that is traditional; the works of nature are ever *a freshly-uttered word of God.*"

It has often been remarked that Goethe would never have become so great a poet but for his profound study of nature; and it is unquestionably no less true, that had he not been such a poet, he could never have attained to so deep an insight into natural science, nor have laboured so ingeniously at its advancement. For these

two tendencies of his were but branches springing from one and the same mighty radical force—the desire of apprehending both the inner and the outer world in their totality, and of giving them a living form, anew, out of himself. In him, the powers of apprehension and creation were so completely blended, that every perception immediately became a picture ; every picture that he called into existence instantly appeared reality.

As the fresh breath of the most secret life of nature breathes upon us from out his songs,—as, in his dramatic and romantic creations, we meet on every side real life-warm figures,—even so does that activity of social life which attracts his glance immediately acquire form, bearing, and a certain significance;—nay, severe science, even, assumes the air of liberal art under his handling.

The capacity of ascending rapidly from

the Particular to the Universal,—of connecting the apparently severed,—and of discovering for every varying phenomenon the satisfactory formula of the law under which it falls, was never possessed in a higher degree by any mortal whatsoever. Hence, in every branch of natural science an *apperçu* presented itself readily, and without effort to his mind; or, as he expressed it, the perception (*gewahrwerden*—becoming-aware) of one grand maxim broke upon him, and suddenly poured its light over the whole field of enquiry. I once heard him say, "I let objects and circumstances quietly work upon me; then note their operation, and labour to reproduce them to others, true and unadulterated: this is the whole secret of what people are pleased to call geniality*."

* *Genialität. Genius* does not express this correctly. Geniality may be called the outward expression of the inward spirit—genius.—*Transl.*

It is not to be wondered at that the Theory of Colour,—that beautiful, mysterious child of light,—should excite his deepest attention. What appearance in nature could be more germane to the poet's fancy? But we cannot contemplate without wonder the unwearied patience, the incessant toil, with which the life-enjoying man, in his best days, submitted to go through endless experiments and enquiries, in profound solitude, that he might gain the solution of that great riddle which floated in dim presentiment before his eyes. With severe self-mastery he kept for many years from the public what was become perfectly clear to himself; unceasingly busied in secret with the task of bringing it into form, and of substantiating it by numerous experiments, so that he might at length give it to the world,—a common and useful possession.

Even in his latter years nothing gave him

such delight as to find that his *Farbenlehre* (at first so generally and so violently attacked) had gradually taken root, and had begun to obtain approving voices, even in other countries. No distractions of external life,—not the most attractive society, not the highest feast of art,—could withdraw him from his observations of nature.

At Venice we see him enraptured at the confirmation of some craniological fact which he received from a sheep's skull he accidentally picked up on the shores of the Lido; in Sicily, amid the ruins of Agrigentum, we find him following out his idea of an archetypal plant (*urpflanz**); at Breslau, in the midst of the busiest political and military preparations, studying comparative anatomy; in Champagne, amid the danger and calamity of retreat,—in Mainz, in the thunder of the besieger's fire, investigating

* See Note 4, vol. I.

chromatic phenomena, and forgetting every peril and horror of the moment in the study of physical science.

Restored to peaceful life, he immediately hastened to renew and strengthen his intimate connection with the teachers of the natural sciences in Jena; he founded, arranged, and promoted museums and collections of every kind; procured for the botanic garden increase of space and of means; and in the earliest hours of the winter mornings zealously attended Loder's anatomical lectures, in company with his friend Heinrich Meyer. By a fortunate accident, the lively interest he took in the meetings of the Society of Naturalists led to that intimate friendship with Schiller, which was one of the fairest incidents of his life.

Whatever the most favourable circumstances can effect, at that time combined to call forth such a brilliant display of genius,

talent, and science at Jena, as will not easily be found again. Celebrated and able teachers in all departments; daring and powerful rising talents; unwearied enquirers in philosophy*, natural science, and æsthetics; a numerous youth, eager for instruction and ready of apprehension; and, superadded to all this, a cheerful animated society, graced by accomplished women.

Out of each of these elements Goethe had the art of attracting whatever was congenial or akin to his tastes, and of dexterously interweaving it in the circle of his own occupations; thus adding to his own treasures of science, that he might dispense them again at fitting time and place; treating the staid and regular course of the elder men with respect; the bolder flights of the young with

* The reader has probably remarked before now, that Germans never use *philosophy* in the corrupt way which prevails here, and which they never speak of without wonder.—*Transl.*

favour and indulgence; every where encouraging and stimulating a lively struggle after knowledge and excellence; and yet, in the midst of these multifold pursuits and objects of interest, ever maintaining the absolute independance of his own individual position.

Wilhelm and Alexander von Humbold, were long domesticated at Jena; affectionate regard, unconquerable eagerness in investigating and establishing facts and principles, the noblest interests of civilization, bound them firmly and closely to Goethe and Schiller, who, on the other hand, found refreshment and reward in a free interchange of ideas with the noble brothers.

It is sufficiently notorious how much the world is indebted to that harmonious cooperation, in which every thing that was attained called forth fresh and more ardent desire for further attainment, and every

triumph of the one was most deeply and intensely enjoyed by the other.

Goethe's fairest recompense for the sacrifice of all the time and trouble he for years devoted to the theatre at Weimar, was Schiller's sympathy and lively approbation. Schiller, earnest and profound, turned with cheerfulness to the stage, and from this picture of life acquired new relish for life itself. He perceived with astonishment, that the actors whom Goethe had trained gave him back his own dramatic creations in a purer form. Urged and allured to ever higher excellence, poet and actor rivalled each other in the noblest endeavours,—the former, to invent and to combine the grand and the original; the latter, to conceive it clearly and to represent it worthily.

No kind of personal sacrifice and devotion was spared; readings and rehearsals were heard and repeated with unwearied

patience; every character thoroughly defined, developed, livingly depicted;—the harmony of the whole acutely conceived, carefully worked out and completed.

No where did Goethe more freely exercise the spell of his imposing person and air than among his dramatic disciples; rigorous and earnest in his demands, unalterable in his determinations, prompt and delighted to acknowledge every successful attempt, attentive to the smallest as well as to the greatest, and calling forth in every one his most hidden powers,—in a narrow circle, and often with slender means, he accomplished what appeared incredible;—his encouraging glance was a rich reward; his kind word an invaluable gift. Every one felt himself greater and more powerful in the place which he had assigned to him, and the stamp of his approbation seemed to be a sort of consecration for life.

No one who has not seen and heard with

what pious fidelity the veterans of that time of Goethe's and Schiller's cheerful, spirited co-operation, treasured every recollection of these, their heroes; with what transport they dwelt on every detail of their proceedings; and how the mere mention of their names called forth the flash of youthful pleasure from their eyes; can have an idea of the affectionate attachment and enthusiastic veneration which those great men inspired.

When the fairest charm of Goethe's life departed with Schiller, he sought and found in the study of natural science the only consolation worthy of him; and regained his fortitude and composure only by redoubled exertions to elucidate the darkest problems of nature.

The battle of Jena overtook him just as he had concluded the first part of his *Farbenlehre,* and hardly had he in some degree recovered from the misery and terror which

filled our quiet valleys, when, in order to withdraw himself entirely from external annoyances, he went over the Metamorphosis of Plants afresh, and plunged into the deepest observations of organic nature.

At every new step the silent presentiments of his soul, to which order, sequence, and concatenation were absolute wants, received fresh confirmation. If, in the wild tumults of war, he saw the strongest ties loosened, the best-laid plans defeated, the edifice of the century suddenly shaken, and chance and arbitrary caprice ruling with despotic sway,—in the kingdom of nature, he beheld on all sides the peaceful working of plastic powers, acting according to fixed laws, the unbroken chain of living development, and throughout, even in apparent diversity, the revelation of a holy rule*.

Thus, amid the storms of the outer world,

* See the Metamorphosis of Plants, p. 170, vol. I.

were his inward peace restored, his intellectual possessions enlarged, his scientific activity invigorated and enhanced.

Alexander von Humbold dedicated his "Ideas towards a Geography of Plants" (*Ideen zur Geographie der Pflanzen*) to him. Highly delighted at the treasure of new views which this afforded him, his impatience would not suffer him to wait for the profile chart which was mentioned as about to follow. He instantly composed a symbolic landscape, after the suggestions of the author, and sent it to him as the most welcome return for his gift.

Every remarkable external production, every success of others, excited his own activity; every apprehension of their ideas immediately forced him upon a new exercise of his own productiveness.

Thus too, under painful or threatening circumstances, his best resource was a new intellectual creation, or the strenuous un-

dertaking of some new labour; we may even affirm that most of his writings were the offspring of a positive necessity of freeing himself from some inward discord or overpowering impression; and that it is for this very reason that they are so full of fresh life, and warmth, and truth.

There was a time when the Academy of Jena was suddenly robbed of several of its brightest ornaments; indeed its very existence threatened, by the removal of that establishment of the *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung* (Universal Journal of Literature), which had contributed so much to its celebrity. Goethe was just then intensely occupied with the continuation of his *Natürliche Tochter*; nevertheless, he did not hesitate to detach himself from it, allied himself with his old and tried friend and colleague Minister von Voigt, in a strenuous endeavour to counteract the effect of this blow at the prosperity of Jena; sought out with

unwearied diligence, far and near, minds fitted and disposed to coalesce in his aim; and meditated day and night how to awaken and keep alive a fresh spirit of productive criticism. In this way he succeeded in calling into existence a new establishment, perfectly similar to the other, before its opponents could even dream of it; and he quickly found able teachers to replace those who had withdrawn themselves.

Many of the best pieces of criticism of that date may be regarded as the precious fruit of this, at first, unwelcome excitement: it will suffice here to mention the incomparable characteristic critiques of the poems of Voss*, Hebel, and Grübel.

The disorderly state of the libraries at Jena, scattered about in different rooms, some of them gloomy and uncomfortable, had long been a distress to him, but a strange concurrence of circumstances had

* Vide Note 5, vol. I.

hitherto obstructed all attempts at a more convenient arrangement. At length he received full powers to act, and immediately declared all obstacles null*; took not the slightest notice of the resistence, the intrigues, or protests of the opponents; knocked down the walls and screens behind which they tried to entrench themselves; took instant possession of the requisite space; stimulated the activity of industrious helpers in every conceivable manner, and rested not till he saw the several collections of books brought together into a Whole, worthy of the university; systematically arranged,

* These are Goethe's own words: the sentence is very characteristic,—"At length I received a commission, by gracious order (of the Duke), to undertake the matter without delay. Here, then, nothing remained but to think over the thing well again, and to declare the hindrances null (*die Hindernisse für Null zu erklären*), as must be done in every considerable undertaking; especially when it has to be courageously set about with the clause *non obstantibus quibuscunque*."—(*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte.*)—*Transl.*

and placed in open, cheerful rooms accessible to all.

He next turned his attention to the embellishment of the town and neighbourhood; established a veterinary school, and endeavoured in all directions to excite that spirit of methodical exertion and cheerful industry, which appeared to him the necessary groundwork of the gradual improvement and exaltation of our civil condition.

His interest in architecture and technical productions was heightened by the active part he took in the rebuilding and internal decoration of the palace at Weimar. The free-school of Design* at Weimar, established under his superintendance (on the model of which similar institutions were afterwards established at Jena and Eisenach), had the effect of continually bringing forward useful talent and skill; and of diffusing, even in the lowest classes, taste, and

* Vide Note 2, vol. I.

feeling for beauty of form in objects of daily use. Wherever a remarkable talent for liberal or technical art displayed itself, it was sure to find instruction, and, through Goethe's fostering care, munificent support from the Prince.

To extend still further the sphere of noble activity, and to exemplify practically the principles laid down in the *Propyläen*, he undertook, in conjunction with his friend Meyer, to announce a distribution of appropriate prizes for attempts in the arts of design, and to form a yearly exhibition of all the works sent to them from far or near. The invitation of the Master was most prolific in its results. Youthful and more matured talents were soon seen, in pursuance of his views, engaged in an honourable rivalry; *amateurs* and spectators assembled in great numbers; and as each turned with preference to this or that work of art, and thought he excelled his neighbour in taste,

all awaited with eager impatience the sentence of the judge. This followed, to the greater or less satisfaction of the candidate and of the public; the distribution of the prizes, accompanied with a detailed critique on the various works, was published, and new incitements, new hopes, were held out to victor and to vanquished for a future exhibition.

For seven years were industry and judgment in art thus, in various ways, excited, animated, encouraged; when overwhelming political events, and the consequences of war, put an end to this among other peaceful efforts; and a period of political excitement began, the ever-extending whirlpool of which swallows up much promising talent, nay, not unfrequently threatens to break down the dams of civilization.

Goethe has often been reproached with taking little interest in the political forms of his country; with having failed to raise his voice in moments of the greatest political excitement; and with having even, on several occasions, showed himself disinclined to liberal opinions. It certainly lay not in his nature to strive after a political activity, the primary conditions of which were incompatible with the sphere of existence he had made his own; and the consequences of which were not within his ken. From his elevated point of view, history appeared to him nothing more than a record of an eternally repeated, nay, necessary, conflict between the follies and passions of men, and the nobler interests of civilization: he knew too well the dangers, or, at least, the very problematical results, of uncalled-for interference: he would not suffer the pure element of his thoughts and works to be troubled by the confused and

tumultuous incidents of the day:—still less would he permit himself to be made the mouth-piece of a party,—in spite of Gall's declaration, that the organ of popular oratory was singularly developed in his head.

It was his persuasion that much less could be done for man from without than from within; and that an honest and vigorous will could make to itself a path, and employ its activity to advantage, under every form of civil society.

Actuated by this persuasion, he held fast to order and obedience to law, as to the main pillars of the public weal. Whatever threatened to retard or to trouble the progress of moral and intellectual improvement, and the methodical application and employment of the powers of nature; or to abandon all that is best and highest in existence to the wild freaks of unbridled passion and the domination of rude and violent men, was, to him, the true tyranny, the

mortal foe of freedom, the utterly insufferable evil.

This was the persuasion which dictated all his endeavours to influence the minds of others by conversation or by writing;—to suggest, to instruct, to encourage, to restrain;—to represent the False, the Distorted, the Vulgar, in all their nothingness:—to ally himself entirely with noble spirits, and steadfastly to maintain that higher freedom of thought and of will, guided by reason, which raises man to the true dignity of human nature.

In his early youth Möser's Patriotic Fantasies (*Patriotische Fantasien*) had afforded him great enjoyment and profit, and were indeed the occasion of his first gaining the friendship of the young and intelligent Duke of Weimar. In his riper years, he recorded the fruits of earnest observation and profound reflexion on the nature, the vices, and the remedies of the common-

weal, in various of his writings; sometimes in veiled symbolic language, sometimes more obviously; nowhere perhaps more fully and expressly than in *Wilhelm Meister*, in the *Wanderjahren*, and in his little poetical maxims: though indeed without hawking them about in the public market as universal recipes.

It was precisely the deep significancy which he perceived in every political event; the lofty earnestness with which he demanded from the Governing and the Governed an enlightened and benevolent mode of regarding and of exercising their respective rights and obligations; — the aversion he had for every presumptuous, disorderly, undigested course; —it was precisely this noblest tone of political feeling, that rendered common imbecile gossip, or ferocious party spirit, so disgusting, so hateful to him.

Even the mention of such topics some-

times made him truly unhappy. To hear subjects so vast, so weighty, so pregnant, treated with presumption and levity, filled him with a kind of despair.

It is well known how severely he once reproved Madame de Staël, because, after bringing him the news that Moreau was arrested, she immediately afterwards wanted him to enter, as usual, into cheerful conversation and a war of wit*.

* "One little anecdote may stand here for many: Madame de Staël called at my house one evening, before the time of going to court, and, immediately after the first compliments, said to me, with great vehemence and vivacity, 'I have a very important piece of news to tell you; Moreau is arrested with some others, and accused of treason against the Tyrant.'—I, like every body else, had long taken a deep interest in that noble-minded man, and had followed his acts and steps with an anxious eye; I called back the Past to myself in silence, in order, after my manner, to try the Present by it, and to conclude, or at least to divine, the Future from it. The lady changed the conversation, leading it, as usual, to various indifferent subjects; and as I, absorbed in my meditation, knew not how immediately to

"You young people" he used to say, "easily recover when any tragical explosion gives you a transient wound; but we old gentlemen have all possible reasons for guarding ourselves against impressions which produce a violent effect upon us, and interrupt the course of steady employment to no purpose."

answer her, she repeated the reproach she had often expressed, that I was, as usual, '*maussade*' again this evening, and that it was impossible to have any agreeable conversation with me.

"I was now angry in earnest; and told her she was incapable of any real feeling or sympathy;—that she burst in upon me, knocked me down with a dreadful blow, and then required that I should be ready to pipe my tune the next instant, and to hop from one object to another.

"Such expressions were exactly to her taste. She liked to excite vehement emotion—no matter what. To sooth me, she that moment spoke seriously on this important event, and showed great insight into the situation of things, as well as into characters."

I have extracted this scene from the *Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, in Goethe's own words. Madame de Staël's visit to Weimar occurred in 1804.—*Transl.*

When his mind was filled with any great thought, or any new work, he would sometimes refuse to hear a word read from newspapers or public prints.

"It sometimes strikes one," he writes to Zelter, "that one knows as much of the Past as one's neighbours, and that the knowledge of what the day brings forth makes one neither the wiser nor the better. This is of great importance. For if we consider it attentively, it is mere pedantry (*Philisterey**) in private persons to bestow so much of their interest upon affairs over which they have no control. And then, too, I may say in your ear, that I am so happy in my old age as to have thoughts arise within me which it were worth living over again to bring to maturity and action. Therefore we, as long as it is day, will not busy ourselves with *Allotria*."

* For an attempt to explain this word see the note in page 212 of this volume.

On another occasion he writes to a young friend:—

"It is perfectly indifferent within what circle an honest man acts, provided he do but know how thoroughly to understand, and completely to fill out that circle. But where a man has no power of *acting*, he ought not to bestow any great solicitude; nor presumptuously to want to act out of the limits of the demands and the capacities of the circle in which God and nature have placed him. Every thing precipitate is injurious; it is not wholesome to over-leap intermediate steps; and yet, now-adays, almost every thing is precipitate, and almost every one is inclined to advance by leaps. Let every one only do the Right in his place, without troubling himself about the turmoil of the world, (which, far or near, consumes the hours in the most unprofitable manner) and like-minded men will soon attach themselves to him, and confidential interchange

of thoughts, and growing insight into things, will of themselves form ever widening circles.

"Damit das Gute wirke, wachse, fromme,
Damit der Tag des Edlen endlich komme*."

And what intellectual statistics were competent to number all the circles which Goethe formed, by such means, during the course of his long life of fresh, vigorous action? or to reckon link after link of the spiritual chain of his activity as it wound itself endlessly around Present and Future?

Around him, all must acquire life, form, motion;—all must lend itself to energetic action. The Symmetrical must be sought out and brought home, must be thoroughly apprehended, must be modelled anew into fresh forms. Without assuming the pedagogue or the pedant, he impressed a peculiar stamp on all that surrounded or assisted

* So that the Good may work, may grow, may profit;
So that the day of the Just may come at length.

him; he knew how to keep every man within the limits of his own appropriate sphere;—but, within that, to urge him on to excellence and to productiveness; to engraft in his mind invariable maxims of order, steadiness, and consistency, out of which the germs of a higher culture might gradually and spontaneously unfold themselves.

The Grand Duke, Karl August, had united all the several museums and institutions of art and science under one distinct department, and placed it under Goethe's exclusive superintendence—granting him the most perfect liberty and independence of action. Here, then, he could follow out his practical objects systematically. It was no slight task—considering the boundless extent of these objects contrasted with the narrowness of the means—to satisfy in any degree the demands of advancing civilization. It required a careful weighing of the

Necessary, of the truly Profitable—a resolute exclusion of the merely apparently Useful—of that which flattered the tastes and propensities of the day.

In his direction of the public institutions, Goethe followed the same maxims which regulated his own collections of objects of art or science—rather to allow each to grow gradually and systemetrically from small beginnings, than to strive after an imposing effect by irregular and untimely efforts; or to try to start at once into distinction. He aimed not at display and effect, but at securing facilities and appropriate aids to improvement in every department; at awakening and confirming in young aspirants the feeling and the power of advancing with energy and spirit in a path marked out by their own individual character and tastes. Thus did he find means, by tranquil, steady perseverance, and by attentive supervision, to bring together some-

thing really considerable and useful in every branch. Thus were the various institutions, museums, libraries, collections of all kinds, brought to a high pitch of substantial value and practical utility.

How many distinguished men who now occupy a high and honorable station in arts or letters, have experienced his inspiring kindness, his instructive and animating encouragement and assistance in their early efforts!

But he resolutely withdrew his countenance as soon as he saw symptoms of vague, capricious desire to attempt every thing—of boundless, undefined projects. In these cases the expression, "Good people—there is nothing to be done for them*!" laconically expressed his resignation of all hope of profitable influence over them.

It is possible that stronger remonstrances, a more imposing and direct expression

* "Gute menschen, ihnen ist nicht zu helfen!"

of disapprobation on his part, might have reclaimed much wandering or misapplied talent from its errors, ere it was too late: but the fruitless trouble of earlier years, and much painful experience, had perhaps inspired him with more distrust of the power which his personal qualities, and his opinion, so easily gained over every one on whom he bestowed counsel and sympathy, than seem justifiable to us. Despising sudden and momentary influences, and averse from all polemics, he had laid it down as a maxim, to work by means of ever-renewed exposition and practice of the True and the Right; but as seldom as possible by contest and opposition.

"There are two ways," I have often heard him say, "of attaining an important end, and of producing what is truly great—force and perseverance. The former soon becomes odious, irritates resistance and counteraction, and is moreover within the

reach of only a few favoured individuals; but perseverance—steady, unflinching perseverance—may be practised by the most humble, and will seldom fail of its end; because its quiet power grows resistlessly with the lapse of time. Where, therefore, I cannot follow out a course of action with steadiness and persistency, and exercise a continuous influence, it is more advisable not to try to act at all: especially because such broken efforts only disturb the natural course and development of things (which often bring their own remedies), while they can give no security for any more favourable turn of events.

Time was, to him, the most precious element. He had the art, above all men, of using it, of turning it to real account, and, in the midst of the press of countless de-

tails, of retaining sufficient collectedness, to enable him to hold fast on the thread of profound enquiry, or poetical creation.

On one occasion, when he was honoured with a visit from an exalted monarch, he slipped away for a few minutes, in the midst of a most interesting conversation, and went to write down an idea which had just struck him for his Faust.

" The day is immeasurably long to him who knows how to value and to use it," I have often heard him say. His love of order, too, was carried to a height almost incredible. Not only were all the letters he received, and drafts or copies of all he sent, put together every month in distinct volumes ; — not only did he draw out and arrange, with equal regularity, documents relating to all his undertakings, even such as that masked procession which he directed ;—he likewise drew up periodical tables of the results of his manysided activity,

his studies and acquisitions, and, at the end of the year, collected these into one more condensed general view of his intellectual works and progress.

He never omitted to draw out a full and accurate scheme of every important subject upon which he was about to work;—not only as a means of fixing the first happy moments of inspiration, but that he might have it in his power to take up the several parts at pleasure, and to work them out according to the disposition of his mind; at the same time that he was secure of retaining their proper order and concatenation.

Every thing that was sent out in writing—the smallest note of invitation—must be written, folded, and sealed with the greatest possible care, neatness, and elegance. Every thing unsymmetrical—the slightest blot or scratch—was intolerable to him. His enjoyment from the sight of the most beautiful engraving was disturbed if he saw

it awkwardly handled, or at all crumpled; for all that surrounded him, and all that proceeded from him, must be in unison with the symmetry and clearness of his inner perceptions, and nothing must be allowed to trouble the harmony of the impression.

Change of employment was his only recreation; and if we see from his journals (which he regularly dictated at two divisions of the day) how, at his advanced age, he devoted himself from the earliest hours of morning to innumerable literary labours, letters, official arrangements, examinations of literary productions or works of art sent for his inspection; to severe study or light reading of every kind and variety; we ought to deem it matter for gratitude, nay for astonishment, that he gave up some hours of almost every day to the visits of foreigners or of his countrymen. From time to time, indeed, he endeavoured to seclude himself rigorously from the world;

but a feeling of the necessity of keeping himself in contact with it always returned—that he might not, to use his own expression, "become a living mummy,"—or lose all knowledge of the interests of the day, at home and abroad.

"Send me all sorts of intelligence, old and new, and even of the moment," writes he to his beloved Zelter; "for though I pull up my drawbridge and carry out my fortifications further and further, yet I must now and then take in tidings."

The subject upon which he was employed absorbed him wholly for the time. He identified himself with it in all its parts, and had the power, whenever he had imposed upon himself any important task, of steadily excluding from his mind all trains of ideas foreign to that subject.

"In the hundreds of things which interest me," says he, "one always places itself in the centre, as chief planet, and the re-

maining *quodlibet* of my life revolves around it in various moon-like shapes, until at length one or other of them succeeds in working itself into the centre in its turn."

Not always, however, could he obtain this instantaneous self-concentration; and fully conscious of his vehement susceptibility and irritability, he then seized on the extremest means, and suddenly and inexorably, as if in a state of siege, cut off all communication from without.

Scarcely, however, had solitude delivered him of the full torrent of crouding thoughts, than he declared himself free again, and accessible to new objects of interest; carefully knit up the threads he had let drop, and floated and bathed in the fresh element of widely-extended Being and Acting; till a new irresistible crisis of inward metamorphosis transformed him once more into a hermit.

From the countless ties which he had formed, in Germany and abroad;—from the legion of admirers and worshippers, mute or loud, which grew up with the growth of each successive generation around him, gifts and offerings, in art, science, and literature, poured in upon him—often more, indeed, than he knew how to receive. It thus happened, that he let the most interesting communications lie for weeks and months unsealed, if they arrived in his moments of necessary self-isolation. For nothing was more disagreeable to him than to do or to enjoy any thing at an unfitting time; and many a delightful and precious acquisition has he long withheld from the participation of his friends, solely because the suitable moment in which to impart it, the right light in which to view it, had either not arrived, or had escaped him.

And thus, for the very reason that his industry was always directed to a determinate

end, he often fell into arrear as to thanks and replies to the most friendly communications; he used then, with a humourous despair, to declare himself bankrupt. Afterwards, it gave him pain to have appeared unfriendly, and he eagerly seized upon any occasion of restoring the balance of kindness.

But how could he, without utterly destroying himself, have found means to satisfy all the indescribable and often senseless demands and expectations which rushed in upon him in a torrent—wave upon wave?

That almost every German youth who had written a few verses which he thought happy, or a tragedy, should request Goethe's opinion and advice, may be thought natural enough; but that persons of whom he had not the remotest knowledge should try to put themselves into intellectual contact with him—and that, often on the stran-

gest, most preposterous pretexts, such as a marriage, the choice of a profession, a subscription, the building of a house—should apply to him with the utmost coolness and confidence—would be simply ludicrous, did it not also prove how unbounded was the trust reposed in him; how impressed all men were with the conviction that he was an universal helper in every need, moral and physical.

If it lay out of the range of possibility immediately to acknowledge all these missives of art and literature, yet, sooner or later, there came a time in which he gladly acknowledged, promoted, encouraged whatever was truly excellent, or even what justified hope of future excellence. How many who had given up all hope of his notice have been joyfully surprised by an affectionate letter from his own hand,—an honourable proof of his approbation!

It was indeed generally his way, when-

ever any thing new and remarkable presented itself to his notice, to receive it with extreme, though silent, attention: for a time he appeared cold and indifferent, but as soon as he had a clear perception of its nature and bearings, he would either eagerly seize upon it, pursue it and interweave it in the web of his thoughts and actions, or repugn it with energy, or, at the least, obstinately ignore it.

I may venture to affirm that his interest in all that was praiseworthy and useful in inventions, manufactures, technical art, or physical science, instead of declining, increased with his increasing years.

Bold undertakings like the tunnel under the Thames, or the Lake Erie canal, had an irresistible charm for him, and he could not rest till, by means of accurate drawings, plans, and descriptions, he had obtained the most distinct conception possible of the object, its difficulties, and the means and

appliances by which those difficulties were to be subdued.

The search for rock salt which our Glenk, with the divination and persistency of genius, set on foot in various directions around us, invited his attention anew to the recesses of the earth and the most difficult geological problems; and the enterprize, spirit, and perseverance of the man excited such lively sympathy in his mind, that he greeted the first piece of rock salt from the salt-works of Stotterheim, in Weimar, with that admirable poem which, while it celebrates the conquest of science and art over the hostile Kobolds and Gnomes, is itself the triumph of the poet over the most unpromising and intractable materials.

He took great and manifold interest in the missionary reports from Halle,—as he did, indeed, in all endeavours to diffuse higher feelings of morality by religious means; and, if his nearest friends were

sometimes surprised at finding him engaged in the study of the theological writings of Daub, Kreutzer, Paulus, Marheineke, Röhr, or even poring over the folios of the fathers of the Church, his admirers will perhaps be still more so, when they learn, that, at the time of the jubilee of the reformation, he was most intently busied on an historical cantata on Luther and the Reformation, a complete sketch of which, in all its parts, was found among his papers.

I still remember the *naif* wonder of a worthy French clergyman from Paris, who thought he was visiting a great poet merely, when Goethe, in the course of conversation, unexpectedly unrolled before him the whole ecclesiastical history of France during the last three centuries, drawn in grand and masterly outlines, and illumined with the lightning-flashes of his remarks.

With the same interest with which he listened to the description of the battle of

Trafalgar in all its minutest details, which a British naval officer gave him at his request, did he attend to the several sketches or plans (which must by no means be omitted to be laid before him) of every new project for improvements at home—whether it were a road, a church, a school, or only a gateway.

Among the thousands of travellers who, during so many years, came from all countries and climes to pay their respects to him, there was perhaps not one who did not find sympathy, information, and interest in his own peculiar profession or pursuit. I was once commissioned to introduce to him an Englishman, formerly governor of Jamaica, and his intelligent wife; several hours soon passed in animated conversation. Now, after the lapse of years, I find this note in his Journal.

"Much pleased with the acquaintance of Lord and Lady ———. It afforded me the

wished-for opportunity of refreshing my knowledge of the condition of Jamaica, pretty completely."

One of his greatest and most peculiar enjoyments was the weekly visit which both the deceased Grand Duchess Luise and the reigning Grand Duchess and Grand Princess Maria, constantly paid him on a fixed day and hour.

It were hardly possible for persons to stand in a more tender and noble relation to each other: deep-felt respect and confidential frankness—thoughts and feelings imparted with dignity, and received with true elevation of mind—the most delightful and graceful interchange of subjects, and the steadiest adherence to opinions and pursuits.

Whatever of interest occurred to Goethe

in the course of the week, in art, science, or literature—the most welcome and agreeable was always that which he could exhibit and explain to his distinguished visitors with a certainty of their sympathy. If ever some inevitable obstacle to the wonted visit occurred, he seemed to feel a chasm in his existence; for it was exactly the constancy, the punctual recurrence of those days and hours, which, to him, gave them their peculiar charm—which had the most animating effect on him through the whole week. Amid the vast variety of external impressions and internal workings, he found in the steadiness of this beautiful, pure, and noble connexion, not only a cheering object, but a beneficent resting-place, whence his mind rose refreshed, to devote itself with more varied powers to the tranquil observation of all things.

For it was an absolute want of his nature to gain a clear conception of every subject,

however heterogeneous; and the incredible readiness with which he could transform every incident, every personal state or situation, into an *Idea*, must be regarded as the main foundation of his practical wisdom and good sense; and certainly contributed, more than any other quality, to preserve a man by nature so passionate, so easily and so deeply excitable, in serene equanimity amid all the catastrophes of life. As he invariably referred every passing and particular incident to some higher and universal standard, and sought to bring it under some exhaustive formula, he could strip it of all that was startling or repulsive, and could then calmly regard it as an example of conformity to general rules of nature;—or neutralize it as a simply historical fact;—an addition to his stock of ideas. How often have I heard him say, "That may now turn out as it will—the conception of it I have got fast hold of; it is a strange com-

plicated affair, but it is perfectly clear to me now."

Thus did he more and more accustom himself to regard all that was passing around him, whether nearer or more remote, as symbolical; nay, to think even of himself as an historical person; yet without any falling off in affectionate sympathy with friends and like-minded men. On the contrary, this peculiar way of viewing the world and its affairs had only the effect of calming the agitating impressions of a tempestuous, eventful present. If, while contemplating the feverish tremor with which the convulsion of 1830 shook all Europe, he exclaimed, half in despondency,

"Ausserhalb Trojàs versieht man's und innerhalb Trojàs desgleichen*,"

he immediately afterwards wrote in this tranquillizing tone to his friend Zelter. "Think only that with every breath we

* Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra.—*Virgil.*

draw, an etherial lethean stream flows through our whole being, so that we remember our joys but imperfectly, our cares and sorrows scarcely at all. This high gift of God I have long known how to value, to use, and to enhance; and in this I was strengthened by that saying of the antient which comes renewed to me, 'I cease not to learn;—thence only do I mark that I grow older.'

"I have no right to complain, since I retain the power of recognizing with enthusiasm the Good, the Beautiful, the Excelling. Peace with God! and good will to well-willing men!"

In this correspondence with Zelter, which was carried on through a period of more than thirty years—in this sincerest interchange of heart and mind that ever existed between two natures so original—he faithfully recorded every thing that gave him pain or pleasure, and drew, from the an-

swering confessions of his friend, refreshment and strength.

Seldom did a week pass without the exchange of these letters so rich in matter,—these mirrorings-forth of the inward being of each to the other,—sent with a calm delightful satisfaction, as when one looks into the open eyes of a present friend;—expected with eagerness, received with ever-increasing pleasure, they were for both an exhaustless well-spring of renewed youth of the soul. Not less necessary than the in and out-breathing of the vital air to life, was this unbroken interchange of thoughts to both;—when the pulse of the one stood still, how then could that of the other continue to beat*?

When Goethe had to bear the death of

* In a letter which I received from Prince Pückler-Muskau (dated June 25, 1832), he says,—"The celebrated composer Zelter, one of Goethe's most intimate

his only son, he wrote to Zelter thus:—"Here, then, can the mighty conception of duty alone hold us erect. I have no other care than to keep myself in equi-

friends, has died at Berlin, literally, of Goethe's death. They wrote to each other regularly every week, (the correspondence will soon be published). Zelter was in perfect health. But the first Saturday (the day on which he used to receive his letters) after Goethe's death, he became dejected and silent: the second found him ill; and on the third, death softly led him to rejoin his immortal friend."

I may as well mention here, that, if it answers my expectation, I mean to translate parts of this correspondence as soon as it comes out, instead of that between Schiller and Goethe, of which I intended to make an abridged translation, and may still, perhaps, do so hereafter. I have reason to think the former will contain more of Goethe's heart and character than the other, a large portion of which is too purely concerned with German literature to interest English people. This may, perhaps, look like an advertisement: if it does, I can only say that it would be extremely for the benefit of literature if translators would make known to each other what they intend to go to work upon; and I sincerely wish all my fellow-labourers would, as soon as they en-

poise. The body *must*—the spirit *will*;—and he who sees a necessary path prescribed to his will, has no need to ponder much."

Thus did he shut up the deepest grief within his breast, and hastily seized upon a long postponed labour, "in order entirely

tertain a design upon a book, put two lines in the Times —in this wise:—"To Translators: Please to take notice, that I mean to translate the '*Briefwechsel*,' &c.

Signed ———— Translator."

Here then, the remainder either resign all pretension, (supposing any to have conceived rival designs) or throw down their gage, and enter into an understood and honourable competition, out of which much good might ensue.

As matters are now, every body is in the dark as to his neighbour's designs;—three or four begin upon any promising book;—booksellers undertake it with no more concert, and have no other notion of securing themselves from loss than by hunting translator and printer to death. In this state of things, the quickest translator is the best. Need we wonder at the produce of such a system? Having thus bespoken Zelter, I should be thankful to be warned of any other claims, that I may withdraw my own if I see fit.—*Transl.*

to lose himself in it." In a fortnight, he had nearly completed the fourth volume of his life, when nature avenged herself for the violence he had done her: the bursting of a blood-vessel brought him to the brink of the grave.

He recovered surprisingly, and immediately made use of his restored health to put his house most carefully in order; made all his testamentary dispositions as to his works and manuscripts with perfect cheerfulness, and earnestly employed himself in fully making up his account with the world.

But in looking over his manuscripts it vexed him to leave his *Faust* unfinished; the greater part of the fourth act of the second part was wanting; he laid it down as a law to himself to complete it worthily, and, on the day before his last birthday, he was enabled to announce that the highest task of his life was completed. He sealed it under a tenfold seal, escaped from the

congratulations of friends, and hastened to revisit, after many many years, the scene of his earliest cares and endeavours, as well as of the happiest and richest hours of his life. He went to Ilmenau. The deep calm of the woods—the fresh breath of the hills—breathed new life into him. With refreshed and invigorated mind he returned home, and felt himself inspired to undertake new observations of nature.

The Theory of Colours was revised, completed, confirmed:—the nature of the rainbow more accurately examined, and unwearied thought bestowed on the spiral tendency of vegetable formation.

"I feel myself surrounded, nay beseiged, by all the spirits I ever conjured up," he was heard to say.

As a relaxation, he had Plutarch read aloud to him quite through. He would try his judgment too upon the present state of the world, and took up the modern French

literature,—that 'literature of despair,' as he called it,—with as much patience and ardour as if he had had still many lustres in which to look on at the motley game of life. Here he perceived how the dispute between Cuvier and Geoffroi de St. Hilaire, concerning the original type of the animal world, touched his own darling theory; he was immediately seized with the most ardent desire once more to raise his voice with spirit and vigour on the subject: he sent an article to Varnhagen von Ense; despatched long and interesting letters the same day to Wilhelm von Humbold*, Zelter, Count Caspar von Sternberg, and other friends.—Then did the silent, peaceful Genius unexpectedly draw near, and, in the midst of the most cheerful industry, of the most zealous and benevolent schemes and actions, we saw him summoned to that

* See Extracts from the posthumous number of *Kunst und Alterthum,* at the end of Vol. III.—*Transl.*

higher and more perfect sphere of activity where that grand solving word which he had uttered to his friends a year before, shall be fulfilled.

"Es gilt am Ende doch nur vorwärts*."

* Mr. Felix Mendelssohn has had the kindness to give me the following remarkable words, which Goethe uttered to him two years ago, when Mr. Mendelssohn was his guest, in the course of a conversation relating to Schiller:

"Er hatte ein *furchtbares* Fortschreiten. Wenn ich ihn einmal acht Tage lang nicht gesehen hatte, so staunte ich und wusste nicht, wo ich ihn anfassen sollte, und fand ihn schon wieder weitergeschritten. Und so ging er immer vorwärts bis Sechs und vierzig Jahre;—da war er denn freilich weit genug."

TRANSLATION.

"He strode forward with awful rapidity. If I was a week without seeing him, when we met I was astounded, and knew not where to lay hold of him, I found him so much further advanced. And so he went on, ever forwards, for forty-six years;—then, indeed, he had gone far enough."

What a sublime conception of life—and of death!—*Transl.*

NOTES.

As I feel that, after all, Goethe is best illustrated by himself; and that by far the most valuable part of this compilation is what I have taken from his own works, I am tempted to add a few notes, which, without any very rigorous application in detail, will be found highly illustrative of Herr von Müller's interesting and noble sketch. I would fain beg the reader's particular attention to the affecting notice of Schiller's death.

NOTE. Page 258.

"Modesty properly belongs only to personal intercourse. In good society it is fitting that no one should predominate; it is necessary that the meanest should stand in a certain relation of equality with the most distinguished. But in all free-written delineation we require truth, either in relation to the subject-matter, or in relation to the

feelings of the delineator, and, God willing, to both. He who does not like to read a writer who feels and estimates himself and his subject, may generally as well leave the Best unread." — *Recensionen*, p. 135.

Note. Page 263.

"I called up the *Näturliche Tochter* before my mind; the scheme of which had lain for years among my papers.

"As occasion permitted, I thought it out, but from a superstition which had been confirmed by experience, that I must not speak of an undertaking if I would have it succeed, I kept this work even from Schiller, and thus appeared to him unsympathising, and void of faith or works."—*Tag- und-Jahres Hefte*, 1801.

"A very deep meaning lies in that notion, that a man in search of buried treasure must work in utter silence; must speak not a word, whatever appearance, either terrific or delightful, may present itself. And not less significant is the tradition, that one who is on an adventurous pilgrimage to some precious talisman, through the most lonesome mountain path or dreary desert, must walk

onwards without stopping, nor look around him, though fearfully menacing or sweetly enticing voices follow his footsteps, and sound in his ear."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1803.

Note. Page 271.

After speaking of the attentions of the illustrious brothers von Humboldt, in communicating to him all that they observed or produced, he says—

"Here is the place to express in few words how I sought to deserve the good fortune of living at the same time with the most excellent men.

"From the station in which it had pleased God and nature to place me, and where I never ceased to labour according as circumstances would permit, I looked around on all sides where great endeavours were visible, and had any permanent effect. I, for my part, was careful, by means of study, of my own productions, collections, and experiments, to meet them half-way; and thus honestly prepared for the reception of what I had never been able to attain to myself, to make myself worthy, without rivalry or envy, to appropriate that which the best spirits of the age furnished, in all its freshness and vitality. And thus my road ran parallel with many

a fair undertaking, though its end was quite different; the New was thus never strange to me, and I ran no risk of hearing it with surprise, or of rejecting it through antiquated prejudice."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1813.

Note. Page 274.

"In the midst of all this debate and controversy, my suddenly developed connection with Schiller exceeded all my wishes and hopes. From our first intimacy it was one uninterrupted progress in philosophical instruction and æsthetical activity. What I, in my retirement, worked out, began, set a-going, tried to ascertain, to revive, and to turn to account, was very useful for his *Hören*; for me, it was a new spring, in which everything gladsome broke forth into bud and blossom from the hitherto shut up seeds and branches. Of this our correspondence gave the most immediate, pure, and perfect witness."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1794.

"Schiller's sympathy I mention last; it was the deepest and the highest. As his letters are still in existence I need say no more, but that the pub-

lication of them would be one of the fairest gifts that could be offered to an instructed public."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1795.

"Meanwhile the personal intercourse between Schiller and myself was interrupted; we exchanged hasty letters. Some of his, written in the months of February and March, still bear witness to his sufferings, his activity, his devotedness, and his ever-declining hope. In the beginning of May I ventured out*; I found him intending to go to the theatre, from which I would not try to deter him. Indisposition hindered me from accompanying him; and thus we parted before his house-door—never to meet again. In the actual state of my body and mind, which now needed all their strength to sustain themselves, no one dared to bring the tidings of his death into my solitude. He departed on the ninth; I was now doubly and trebly attacked by all my maladies. When I had manned myself, I looked around for some important definite occupation: my first thought was to finish *Demetrius*. From its first project till very recently, we had often talked over the plan. Schiller liked, while he was at his work, to debate how it was to be done, with himself and others; he was as little

* Goethe had been dangerously ill.—*Transl.*

weary of taking others' opinions as of turning his own about in every direction. And thus I had, as it were, accompanied all his pieces, from *Wallenstein* onwards; for the most part, peacefully and amicably; though often, when it came to the execution, I vehemently contested certain things, which ended in one or the other of us giving way. Thus, his grasping, aspiring spirit had sketched out *Demetrius* in far too great extent. I was witness how he gradually contracted his plan, brought the main incidents nearer together, and began here and there to work at it. I had told him my preference of one incident over another, and had thus been counsellor and fellow-labourer in the work, so that the piece was as living to me as to him.

"And now I burned with desire to carry forward our intercourse in despite of death; to preserve his thoughts, views, and designs even in their details; and to show here, for the last time, the highest pitch to which a common labour could be carried, by the redaction of the matter I had inherited together with that I could originate.

"By thus carrying forward his existence I seemed to find compensation for his loss. I hoped to bind together our common friends: the German stage for which we had worked in common,—he composing, defining, determining; I, teaching, practi-

sing, and executing,—would thus, till the coming of some fresh, resembling mind, not be left in utter bereavement by his departure.

"Enough; all that enthusiasm which the despair at a great loss stirs up within us, had seized upon me. I was not engaged in any work,—in a few months the piece would be ended. To have it acted simultaneously in every theatre in Germany would be the noblest funeral rite—prepared by his own hand for himself and his friends. I fancied myself recovered;—I fancied myself comforted. Now, however, arose all sorts of obstacles to the execution of my design; obstacles which some degree of deliberation and discretion might perhaps have removed, but which I did but encrease by passionate vehemence and confusion; I then stubbornly and hastily gave up the whole scheme, and I dare not, even now, think of the state into which I felt myself plunged. Now was Schiller indeed torn from me—now had I first lost his society. My artistical imagination was forbidden to busy itself with the catafalk which I thought to build him, which should outlast his obsequies longer than that of Messina; now it was turned to nothing, and followed the body into that grave which, without pomp or circumstance, had closed upon him. Now first began its decay, for me; intolerable grief

seized me; and, as bodily suffering cut me off from all society, I was secluded in most melancholy solitude. My journal bears no record of that time; the blank leaves tell of the void in my existence; and what there is of information shows only that I went on with the current of business without interest in it, and suffered myself to be guided by it instead of guiding it. How often must I inwardly smile in after times, when sympathizing friends looked in vain for Schiller's monument in Weimar; then and ever I bethought me that I could have founded the noblest, the most satisfactory to him and to our companionship."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1805.

Note. Page 286.

"Reichardt (the composer) had thrown himself with violence and fierceness into the revolution. I, however, beholding, as with my eyes, the dreadful, uncontrollable consequences of events thus forcibly let loose, and espying through the distance a secret similar impulse in my fatherland, held, once for all, fast on existing institutions, at the amendment, vivification, and direction of which towards the Rational and the Intelligible, I have consciously

and unconsciously worked all my life, and neither could nor would disguise this way of thinking."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1795.

"Papadopulos (a young Greek), who often visited me in Jena, once discoursed to me with youthful enthusiasm on the lectures of his philosophical master. 'It sounds,' exclaimed he, 'so sublime when the excellent man speaks of Virtue, Freedom, and Fatherland!' When, however, I enquired what this excellent teacher had to communicate on virtue, freedom, and fatherland, I received for answer, that 'he could not exactly say, but that word and tone sounded continually through his soul, Virtue, Freedom, Fatherland!'"—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1817.

Note. Page 289.

"Convinced for many years that newspapers exist only to amuse the multitude, and to throw dust in their eyes as to the affairs of the day,—whether it be that an external power hinders the editor from speaking the truth, or that his own inward party spirit render it equally impossible to him,—I

read no more; for my news-loving friends inform me of the most important events, and besides there is nothing in the course of this period that I desire to seek."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte.*

Note. Page 299.

"This year (1817) English poetry and literature occupied the fore ground. Lord Byron's poetry engrossed more and more of the public attention, so that men and women, girls and boys, seemed to forget all their *Teutschheit* and nationality. I too got a habit of occupying myself with him. He became a dear cotemporary to me, and I loved to follow him in all his wanderings.

"I had so long heard of Peter Pindar that I wished at last to get a clear idea of him: this I accomplished, but all I recollect is, that he appeared to me a man of some talent devoted to caricature. John Hunter's life seemed highly important as a memento of an admirable mind, which, with little school learning, vigorously and nobly developed itself by the observation of nature.

"The life of Franklin had the same general expression; but, in particulars, different as east from west.

"Elphinstone's 'Cabul' gave us information of distant, hitherto untrodden regions; those better known were most admirably illustrated in Raffles's Java. The magnificence of Indian field-sports, published by Howett, helped our imaginations, which without this delineation of reality would have lost themselves in indistinctness.

"The able and industrious Friedrich Gmelin sent us proof impressions of his engravings for the Duchess of Devonshire's Virgil. Our admiration of his graver was equalled by our regret that he had to lend his skill to such originals. These engravings, destined to accompany a magnificent edition of the *Æneid*, by Annibal Caro, give a melancholy proof of the modern realistic tendence which manifests itself principally among the English. For what can be more melancholy than the plan of helping out a poet by the representation of desolate scenes which the liveliest imagination were unable to recultivate and repeople? Such a plan implies a total want of the perception that Virgil, even at the time he lived, must have had great difficulty in making present to himself those primeval circumstances of the Latin world, in order in some degree to build up the long-deserted, long-vanished, and totally-altered castles and towns of Latium before the eyes of the Romans.

"And do they not reflect that desolate spots, now level with the earth, or sunk into morass, completely paralize the imagination, and rob it of all power of upward or backward flight, by which it might have found it possible to keep pace with the poet?"—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1820.

"In foreign literature what occupied me was *Il Conte di Carmagnola*. The truly amiable author, Alexander Manzoni, a born poet, was, on account of some theatrical offences against the unity of place, accused by his countrymen of romanticism, from the vices of which he was perfectly free. He held to an historical march of events, his poetry had the character of a perfect and spotless humanity, and though he indulged little in figures, his lyrical expressions were admirable, as even ungentle critics were forced to allow. Our good German youths might see in him an example of a man who towers in simple natural grandeur;—perhaps this might reclaim them from their thoroughly false transcendentalism."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte.*

Note. Page 312.

"With Zelter, too, my connection became nearer; during his fortnight's visit we had mutually become much more intimate, in both an artistical and moral sense. He found himself in a strange dilemma between a business * which he had inherited, exercised from youth up, and mastered, and which secured to him a maintenance; and an innate powerful resistless passion for art, which unfolded the whole riches of the world of sound out of his own soul,—carrying on the one, carried along by the other, possessing in the one an acquired dexterity, in the other striving after a dexterity yet to be acquired: he stood not, like Hercules, on the boundary between what was to be embraced and what to be shunned; but he was drawn hither and thither by two muses equally worthy of his homage; one of whom had already possession of him, the other wished to win him to herself. With his honest, sturdy, citizen-like earnestness, he was

* Zelter was brought up a builder. It may be interesting to mention that Felix Mendelssohn was his pupil. Goethe speaks of "the incredible talent of Zelter's most astonishing pupil." This was written when Mr. Mendelssohn was a child.—*Transl.*

as much impressed with the necessity of moral culture as that is akin to, nay embodied with, æsthetic—and the existence of perfection in the one, and not in the other, is not to be thought of."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte*, 1803.

Note. Page 276.

"It often happens that when we meet strangers, or persons whom we have not seen of a long time, we find them quite other than what we were wont to imagine them. We remember that this or that celebrated man is passionately addicted to such or such a science; we meet him, and wish to gain information precisely on this point, when behold he has turned to something completely different, and what we seek from him he has entirely lost sight of. Thus it now befel me with Bergrath (Counsellor of Mines) Werner, who was glad to escape from all oryktognostic and geognostic conversation, and called our attention to quite other subjects.

"At this time he was entirely devoted to enquiry into language, the origin, derivation, and kindred of which afforded his acute industry perpetual employment; and before long he had completely won

us over to his studies. He carried a library of pasteboard cases about with him, in which he kept all that belonged to the subject arranged in order, as beseemed such a man, and could thus easily and cleverly communicate his knowledge.

"But that this may not appear too paradoxical, let us just reflect how this excellent man was necessarily forced on such a pursuit. Every knowledge demands a second—that a third, and so on for ever. We may trace the tree in its roots, or in its branches and twigs; one thing always springs out of another, and the more what we know (*ein Wissen*) acquires life within us, the more do we see ourselves driven to follow it out, above and below, in all its connection. Werner, when he took to his original science, had used the nomenclature which it had pleased his predecessors to impose; but when he began to discriminate, and new objects daily pressed upon his notice, he felt the necessity of giving names himself.

"Giving names, however, is not so light a matter as people think; and a thoroughly grounded etymologist would be stimulated to many curious observations if he undertook to write a critique of the existing oryktognostic nomenclature. Werner felt this distinctly, and certainly went far enough, when, in order to name the subjects of a certain

science, he wanted to study language generally in its rise, growth, and metaphorical mode of expression, and to learn from it all that was wanted in his pursuit.

"Nobody has a right to prescribe to a man of talents what he shall busy himself about. The mind shoots, from its centre, radii towards its periphery;—if it is stopt there, it falls back quietly on itself, and then sends forth fresh tentative lines from the centre; so that if it be not permitted to it to overleap its circumference, it may at least learn to know and to fill it as completely as possible. And if Werner forgot the end in the means, which we by no means affirm, we were witnesses of the glee with which he pursued his studies, and we learned by him and from him how a man goes to work to restrict himself within one occupation, and to find in it for a time happiness and satisfaction."—*Tag-und-Jahres Hefte.*

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